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A SAN ANTONIO LOVE LETTER

The past few months have brought plenty of challenges for the Alamo City, but they've also reminded us to be grateful for what we love most about San Antonio.

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64 LOOKING BACK

The coronavirus pandemic is unique in world history, but it shares some parallels with the polio pandemic of the 1940s and '50s.



ON THE COVER

San Antonio artist Ray Scarborough turned this month's cover into a coloring book page featuring some of the city's most iconic images.



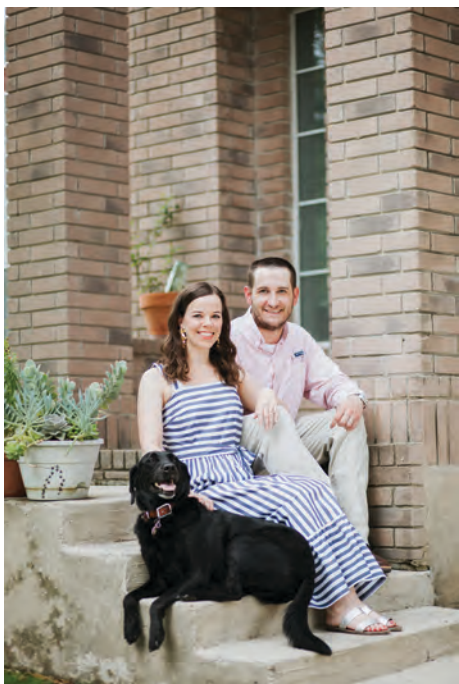
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Community has taken on a deeper meaning in the past few months. The COVID-19 pandemic forced us to isolate away from our friends, colleagues and extended family, but a sense of togetherness rose up to support groups small and large. In neighborhoods, younger folks went grocery shopping for elderly and at-risk neighbors, families began spending more time outdoors and waving hello at passers-by, and some photographers began capturing the moment with socially distant porch portraits. Drive-by birthday and graduation parties brought joy in the form of decorated cars and parading honking.

More broadly, San Antonians went out of their way to order takeout from local restaurants in an effort to help keep their doors open, while chefs and restaurateurs donated thousands of meals to health care workers, hospitality employees temporarily unemployed and others in need of food. Donations to The Big Give's Emergency Relief Fund totaled more than \$930,000 for nonprofits. I even heard several broadcast news stations were sharing footage to limit the number of people needing to be present anywhere.

Seeing residents of the city step up to support one another wasn't surprising, but it reminded our team of the reasons we love living in San Antonio. We decided to celebrate that communal spirit with our cover feature, in which we asked more than a dozen residents to tell us what they love most about living in San Antonio (page 26).

Inspired by the creative at-home art projects we've seen (take a look at Artpace's zine how-to on page 14), we tapped a local artist, Ray Scarborough (aka Tattooed Boy), to draw some of San Antonio's well-known landmarks and cultural icons for our first-ever coloring book cover. Break out the crayons, markers, and colored pencils and inject some color into it with your own artistic interpretation. If you do, I hope you'll share by tagging us (@SanAntonioMag) on social media. We can't wait to see them come to life.

The week we sent this issue to press, the word community once again began to represent so much more than just a group of people. After George Floyd, an unarmed black man, was killed by a Minneapolis police officer while being taken into custody, protests erupted in cities around the country, including in San Antonio. Locals of varied backgrounds came together for peaceful protests in support of the black community. And when some of those protests devolved into vandalism and looting as the night went on, groups that included some the previous night's peaceful protesters turned up the next day to help the small business community put back together their stores that had been ransacked.

Online, important conversations emerged about the need for white Americans to listen and learn about the experiences of people of color—something we already knew but don't act on enough. As a majority white staff, *San Antonio Magazine* committed to working to better represent all of San Antonio in our coverage. While non-African Americans wanted to put their arms around the black community, we did what we could to support that sentiment. We shared a list of black-owned businesses (sanantoniomag.com/blackbusiness) that we continue to update. I encourage you to take a look and learn about some of the hardworking members of our community—and enjoy some delicious food, one-of-a-kind products or a helping hand. We also talked with members of the black community about their experiences (read Charles Davis' heartbreaking personal account on page 12) and about ways they say the whole community can support them. On page 13, you can find a list of local nonprofits to support that promote racial equality.

In our ongoing efforts to be diverse in these pages and online, if you have a story idea you'd like to share or you are a writer or photographer from an under-represented community who is interested in contributing, please reach out to me at editor@sanantoniomag.com.

While San Antonio has a long way to go toward racial equity and economic recovery in the face of the pandemic, I'm still happy to call this community home, and I hope you all are, too.

Rebecca

Rebecca Fontenot Cord

Publisher & Editor in Chief

Kat Carey's porch portraits brought joy to many families during quarantine, including my own. See more of Carey's portraits in "Great Places to Live," page 36.

**COMING UP
NEXT MONTH**

Foodies, this is for you. Hear from chefs about the state of the industry, their favorite places to find unique ingredients and more.

San Antonio

JUNE/JULY 2020 / VOLUME 15 / ISSUE 8



WHY DO YOU LOVE SA?

Rebecca Fontenot Cord

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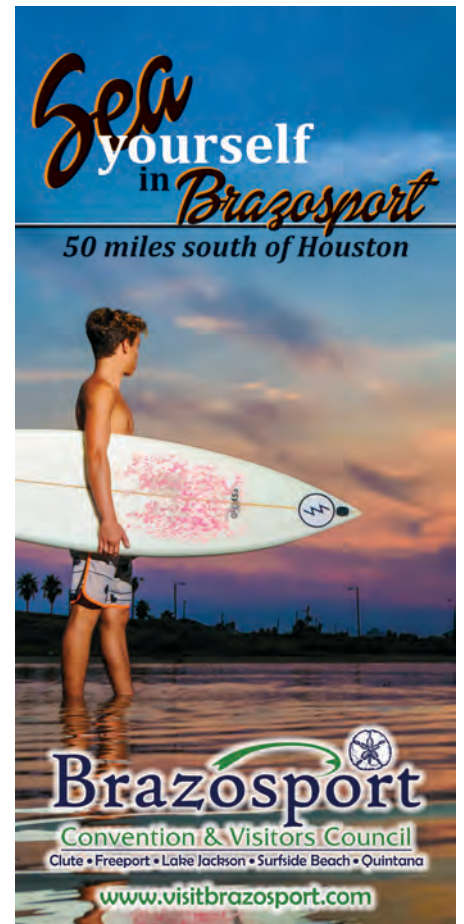
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"I love the diversity and culture San Antonio has to offer. Bonus, our food is absolutely amazing!"

"It's my family's hometown for more than 100 years, it's where I was baptized, it's where I met my wife and where our son was born, and it has been a vibrant, welcoming city that offered me a chance to create a wonderful life."

"I love San Antonio for the culture, the food, the people and our low cost of living compared to other large cities."



Coming Soon...


San Antonio HOME DESIGN AWARDS

A new awards program hosted by San Antonio Magazine to spotlight the best in architecture, interior design, renovations and more in 50+ categories

Submissions open September 1
sanantoniomag.com/designawards



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In the Loop

INSIDE / EDUCATOR IMPACTS p.10 / RUDY GAY'S STYLISH SIDE p.18 / TIK-TOK TAKEOVER p.20

A Moment in Time

The last time San Antonio photographer Joel Salcido remembers seeing the kind of empty looks that COVID-19 produced was in 1984 when he was covering an 8.0 magnitude earthquake in Mexico City. "It's not despair; it's just this expression of being lost," he says. The El Paso native got his start working for his hometown newspaper and he's continued to produce editorial work even as his focus has shifted to more artistic projects in recent years. As San Antonians became accustomed to mostly staying home this spring, Salcido wanted to document what was occurring—both so that he could process

the events and also to create a historical record. "With any creative person, there's an innate need to express yourself and to represent your time on this earth and to record it," he says. He set out on a weekday in late March, before any non-essential businesses were permitted to reopen, starting at San Antonio Missions National Historical Park and making his way through downtown. He ended his day at Alamo Plaza where he captured this shot of an Alamo Ranger guarding the grounds at dusk. "Twenty years from now if a museum does an exhibit on this time frame, I hope this could be one of those images they share," Salcido says.—KATHLEEN PETTY

The New Normal

Experts weigh in on how the lasting impacts from COVID-19 will affect us in education, health care and hospitality

BY KATHLEEN PETTY



EDUCATION

School districts prepare for fall semester, but will students be able to catch up?

IF STUDENTS RETURN TO THE CLASSROOM AS PLANNED THIS FALL, it will have been 22 weeks or longer since they physically sat in a classroom with their teacher and peers.

The shift to online learning due to COVID-19 during the spring semester forced creativity—band students in North East ISD perfected their instrument solos via Zoom critiques, San Antonio ISD distributed computers to over 5,000 students to ensure they were able to connect and high school teachers saw engagement on message boards from students who normally sit quietly. For all of the positive lessons and techniques educators will be able to integrate into their teaching moving forward, though, there were also plenty of challenges that could impact students far beyond quarantine.

“Right now, at this early stage, we mostly have a lot of questions,” says Mike Villarreal, a former state representative and director of the University of Texas at San Antonio Urban Education Institute, which is in the process of surveying thousands of teachers, students and parents countywide to learn the impacts of forced distance learning. “The biggest concerns are for children who are falling behind and were disconnected from their teachers ... The gap is growing between those who are economically

disadvantaged and those who are not.”

In a typical summer, students can lose up to two months of learning from the previous year. This year, according to projections from NWEA, an education nonprofit that focuses on assessments and learning tools for teachers, students could return in the fall with just 70 percent of the reading gains and 50 percent of the math gains that they would have made in a normal year.

That’s due in part, according to their research, because of the lack of classroom time. “Virtual learning is wonderful, but we know there is absolutely no replacement for face-to-face learning where a teacher can see those non-verbal cues and know if a child is really getting the material,” says Aubrey Chancellor, executive director of communications for NEISD. Additionally, many

“Right now, at this early stage, we mostly have a lot of questions.”

students’ ability to learn from home was impacted by trauma from COVID-19 due to caregivers’ loss of jobs, new food insecurity or a lack of access to computers or internet.

Locally, Ann Marie Ryan, UTSA professor and chair in the Department of Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching, says school districts did a “wonderful job” attempting to ensure every student had access to computers and Wi-Fi. However, she adds, even the best efforts can’t overcome the disparity of access and ability to learn at home that inherently exists in an economically divided community.

Even when students are physically in the classroom, the external stressors in their lives have to be addressed if they’re going to reach their maximum learning potential, Eduardo Hernandez, Ph.D., superintendent of Edgewood ISD, said during a conference with city officials. “Before a child can learn, you have to address social-emotional needs,” he says.

Many school districts worked to continue doing that remotely, providing access to school nurses and counselors through hotlines, continuing to provide meals for children who were used to eating lunch and breakfast at school, passing out computers and providing paper packets of instruction materials for those who simply couldn't connect online. Districts also already have begun providing remedial lessons over the summer to those who've fallen behind and will continue that into the school year.

The lessons learned through online instruction may help provide new ways to work with kids individually in the fall. Through Zoom, some teachers found they were able to make more individual connections with students than is possible in a crowded classroom. Others recorded lessons and distributed them through videos or podcasts, allowing students who didn't catch everything the first time the chance to go back and listen again.

When school resumes in the fall, students may be on rotating schedules—coming for part of the day for in-person lessons in classrooms that include fewer students and learning at home or in the library via a computer while another group of students comes into the classroom. School calendars may also include extended breaks and later release dates. For those who still are behind, those breaks could be used to continue learning through online curriculum that this time will be designed ahead of time.

Whatever the solutions, educators agree things won't revert back to the systems of fall 2019 anytime soon. "This has changed how we do things moving forward," Chancellor says.

HEALTH CARE

Dr. Ramon Cancino, director of the Primary Care Center at UT Health San Antonio, and Dr. Ruben Mesa, director of the Mays Cancer Center, home to UT Health San Antonio MD Anderson, share four things to know about changing health care—now and in the future

It's Time to See Your Doctor

If you missed or canceled an annual screening—whether a colonoscopy, mammogram, pap smear, CT scan or even just a physical—it's time to reschedule those appointments. Mesa says those screenings are where many cancer diagnoses begin and catching (plus treating) cancer early can be the difference in survival. The same goes for any symptom you may be ignoring because you don't want to visit a doctor during COVID-19. Whether those symptoms are signs of cancer, heart disease, stroke or some other issue, Mesa says those who ignore problems are the ones who end up with major health events or in the ICU. "It's safe to go

in and get medical care now," he says.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported in May that it saw a "significant decrease" in the number of childhood vaccines ordered, which means many families were not staying current on vaccines. For children and elderly patients, Cancino says staying up to date on vaccinations, whether for shingles in adults or measles and whooping cough in children, is vital for individual health and for public health in general.

Telemedicine Will Grow

Before March, primary care doctors at UT Health San Antonio didn't offer virtual visits. Now, Cancino says, they're here to stay—and insurance is typically covering them. "There was a learning curve for both physicians as well as for patients, but we've been pleased to see that it works," he says. "We liken it to a virtual house call. It's on the patient's time and in the place they feel most comfortable." Certainly telehealth cannot take the place of in-person visits all of the time, but Cancino says they're an ideal alternative for people who can't travel for frequent appointments and for things like diabetes education and weight loss management. He expects the rise in telemedicine to lead to new technologies, like blood pressure cuffs that send readings from your home straight to your physician's computer.

Infection Control is Here to Stay

The days of going into work because you assume your cough is just a mild cold are gone, Mesa says. One of the longer-term impacts of COVID-19 likely will be that we as a society will be much more attune to doing our part to prevent the spread of infection. That means working from home if you're not feeling 100 percent, washing your hands more thoroughly, carrying hand sanitizer and being more cognizant to cleaning surfaces in homes, offices and public spaces. "Clearly there have been many catastrophic things, but I do think there are positives that will come from this," Mesa says.

Mental Health Matters

Cancino says many primary care physicians already were conducting screenings for depression and other mental health issues but have found that's more important now than ever as individuals deal with increased stress. Along with wanting to ensure patients know they have access to mental health care—whether a behavioral health consultant or clinical psychologist—he knows that struggles with depression, stress and anxiety can also lead to coping mechanisms that may lead to other health issues. "People may eat more unhealthily or smoke or have some other unhealthy coping mechanism," he says.

TRAVEL & HOSPITALITY

There's no way to sugarcoat it. One of the city's biggest economic drivers was hit hard, but Cassandra Matej, president and CEO of Visit San Antonio is confident the industry will be strong again

"I'm passionate that I think travel and tourism is going to continue to be a key contributor to the local economy. It has been since the 1968 World's Fair," Matej says. "If our assets were going away, we'd be in jeopardy. But our major and historical attractions aren't going anywhere... This is a trying time for all of us, but we see signs of hope."

\$15.2 billion

In 2017, the most recent data available, the hospitality industry had a \$15.2 billion economic impact on San Antonio. Of that, 52.7 percent came from restaurants and catering, 13.3 percent from travel and transportation, 12.8 percent from recreation and entertainment and 21.3 percent from lodging.

\$116 million

At the end of May, Visit San Antonio estimated \$116 million in economic impact had been lost due to the cancellation of more than 32 events, meetings and conventions planned for this fiscal year.

\$83 million

The city of San Antonio estimated it could lose up to \$83 million in revenue between the airport, the hotel-motel occupancy tax, Convention Center business and activities at the Alamodome.

83,237

During the first two months of quarantine, 83,237 residents in Bexar County were receiving unemployment, with claims coming most often from employees at restaurant and hotels/motels. By mid-May as businesses began to reopen, that number had dropped to 46,332. Statewide, accommodation and food service employees represented the highest number of unemployment claims for seven consecutive weeks.

1 in 7

140,188 people, or nearly one out of every seven workers, are employed in the hospitality industry in a typical year.

18-24 months

Matej predicts Visit San Antonio will put its focus on travelers who can reach San Antonio by car or a short flight for the next one-and-a-half to two years. She adds that many conventions and meetings planned for late summer and fall likely can occur if they're set up to allow guests to maintain social distance from one another. ★

I Was Almost Killed by a Police Officer

As protests over racism and police brutality broke out across the country in late May and early June, UTSA's assistant athletics director of creative services decided it was time to share his own story

BY CHARLES DAVIS



TOP LEFT Charles Davis with his family; **TOP RIGHT, BOTTOM LEFT** In college, around the time of the attack; **BOTTOM RIGHT** Charles Davis is a graphic designer who has spent most of his career working with athletics; he's currently the assistant athletics director for creative services at UTSA



So, I shut up. My mom always told me that if an officer pulls that word, you shut up. He tells me he's in charge and for me to shut up and get out of the vehicle. I comply and step out. The cop proceeds to try to cuff me and says I'm under arrest for suspicious activity. (Keep in mind he has now told me I have a broken taillight and that I look like a criminal in the area.) I flinch. I mean, hell, what else am I gonna do? Well, that's all he needed.

He slammed my face on my car hood. Broke my glasses and cracked some of my teeth. He tells me he's been looking forward to beating a nigger today and does so. Half of my face is bruised and cut. I can't see, but I don't say a word. I just hope that whatever is going to happen will happen quickly. Well, somehow, in all of this, another cop car comes up and the officer asks if everything is OK. He tells him, "Yes, of course." He also whispers to me, "If you say a word, I'm going to the address on your driver's license and I'm killing everyone there, then I'm coming to find you. Or, I can kill you right here." He's got his gun on my side while I'm bent over the car. So, I shut up. The other cop drives off. I look up and he proceeds to beat me with his nightstick. The last thing I saw was a nightstick hitting me in the face before I fell into the ditch next to my car. I woke up about an hour later in the dead of night. Freezing. Bleeding. Crying. Half of my bottom teeth were laying on the ground in a pool of blood. My car had been ransacked.

I drove to the hospital and told them I had been in a car accident. They patched me up as best they could. I still had my teeth in a baggie, hoping they could put them back in. I made it back to my dorm (it took a long time because my glasses were broken) and locked the door. I just sat there crying, thinking I was that close to being dead just because someone didn't like who I am. Didn't like the color of my skin. I've had major teeth problems since then. I have false teeth in my lower jaw because of it. I have legitimate panic attacks when I see cop lights now, as well—especially if I get pulled over for anything.

So, not only can I relate to police brutality. I've lived it. Again, not all cops are this way, but the ones who are need to be addressed. We need reform and we need consequences for police brutality. Many of my friends are in law enforcement and they agree that when cops are bad, they need to be dealt with accordingly. I thank God every day that I made it home that night, and I thank him for every day I've made it home since then. So, for those who say this isn't a problem... now you know.

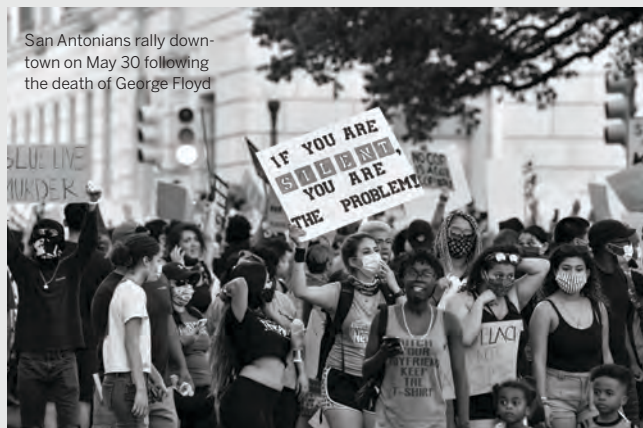
Charles Davis, 38, is the assistant athletics director of creative services for the University of Texas at San Antonio Athletics. He and his wife have two children. He is a proud black man. ★

E

very time I hear of another black man or woman who has been killed by an unjust officer (and I say unjust because I know many officers who are great at their jobs), it just reminds me of the night I was almost killed. I haven't told many people about this, but I think now is the time.

When I was in college (I was 20 or 21), I was coming back from a party in Wimberley, not too far outside of San Marcos. I got pulled over on the way back. I figured it was for speeding. So, I stopped. There is basically nothing around for miles. If y'all have traveled that road, you know what I'm talking about. Cop comes up and asks what I'm doing in the area. "Just heading home, sir," I say. He asks for my license and registration. Tells me that my taillight is out (sound familiar?). He then asks again where I'm coming from. "Coming from a party, sir," I say. He tells me I "fit the description of a burglar in the area." I ask him if the individual is tall, short, has glasses, no glasses, drives my vehicle, etc. Cop tells me, "He looks like you, a nigger. A nigger is a nigger."

San Antonians rally downtown on May 30 following the death of George Floyd



FURTHERING RACIAL EQUALITY

These seven San Antonio organizations work to promote equality, combat racial injustice and preserve the heritage of South Texas' African American community

BY ALEX FULTON

Amid state, national and local protests against racism and police brutality in May and June following the death of George Floyd while being taken into custody by Minneapolis police, donations poured into national and Minnesota-based organizations, including Black Lives Matter, the ACLU and the Minnesota Freedom Fund. Along with those initiatives, consider supporting or getting involved with a San Antonio-based organization.

100 BLACK MEN OF SAN ANTONIO

An organization and service club that started in New York in the 1960s, 100 Black Men focuses on mentorship for youth and college students (and is currently accepting applications for mentors). In SA, the group also hosts a basketball league. 100blackmenofsanantonio.org

BLACK OUTSIDE, INC.

This nonprofit produces programs designed to connect black youth with experiences in the outdoors. Black Outside was also a finalist in this year's Philanthropitch competition to win funds that would support its growth. blackoutside.org

NAACP SAN ANTONIO

Nationally and in San Antonio, the NAACP strives to eliminate racial discrimination and to ensure African American communities have equal rights in every sector, from education to politics. sanantonionaacp.org

SAN ANTONIO AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY ARCHIVE AND MUSEUM

Become a member, donate or volunteer with this nonprofit that is collecting, preserving and sharing stories from San Antonio's African American community. The physical museum opens by appointment (and on some Saturdays), but many stories are available online. saaacm.org

SAN ANTONIO AREA AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY FUND

Part of the San Antonio Area Foundation, this fund works to promote philanthropy and to support nonprofits in San Antonio that serve African Americans. It has distributed more than \$150,000 to charitable organizations and established \$60,000 in loans to black-owned businesses since 2010. saafdn.org

TEXAS ORGANIZING PROJECT

The Texas Organizing Project organizes black and Latino communities to fight to transform the state into one where working people of color have the power and representation they deserve. organizetexas.org

UNITED COMMUNITIES OF SAN ANTONIO

Established in 1954, this organization aims to teach youth to appreciate racial and cultural differences and to develop relationships, particularly with those who may be of a different background. ucfsa.org

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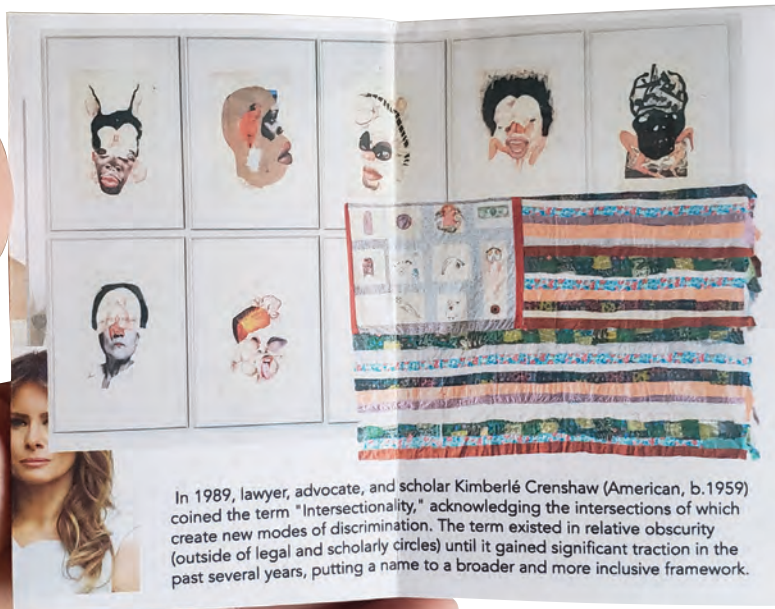
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Creative Storytelling

Make your own zine with this summer art project from Artpace

THERE'S NO RIGHT WAY TO CREATE A ZINE, WHICH IS PRECISELY WHY ASHLEY MIRELES SAYS THEY'RE the perfect DIY project if you're trying to tap into that creative side at home. "They're really fun and accessible," says Ashley Mireles, education director at Artpace San Antonio.

Short for magazine or fanzine, zines are handmade paper booklets that can focus on anything from the last show you binged on Netflix, your favorite superhero or band to recipes or your kids' rock collection. Made from a single sheet of paper, zines can include collages made with images cut from old magazines, handwritten stories or notes, drawings and more. "They can certainly get complicated if you want to incorporate several skills and techniques, but you can also make them with just paper and pen," she says. Mireles shares a tutorial so you can try one at home. Several zines also are available in Artpace's gift shop and zines created by past Artpace Teen Council students can be viewed at the downtown gallery. —KP

What you'll need Instructions

A sheet of paper (Mireles uses an 8 ½-by-11-inch or 11-by-17-inch sheet)

Recycled magazines, newspapers or printed images if you wish to collage

Scissors

Tape or glue (preferably a glue stick)

Markers or colored pencils

Pencil or pen

- 1. Brainstorm.** Mireles says you can just begin, but if you want your zine to tell a story, it's best to figure out what you want to say and create an outline before you start crafting.
- 2. Fold your zine.** To start, fold your piece of paper in half horizontally ("hot dog-style"). Then, unfold it and fold it horizontally the other way to create a nice and crisp crease. Unfold the paper and then fold it in half vertically, pressing down to create a firm crease. While the paper is still folded, fold it in half vertically again. When you open the paper all the way back up, you should have eight different sections, which will become pages. If you see your eight sections, fold the paper vertically one time and then add a slit by cutting into the paper at the fold and continuing until you reach the halfway point of the folded paper. Open the paper back up. Fold it horizontally along that original crease and then pick it up, with one hand on either side of the paper. Squish the two ends together and you'll notice the slit pops open allowing you to continue folding the paper into itself until you have a booklet. Visit sanantoniomag.com/zine for a step-by-step folding video.
- 3. Start creating!** The beauty of zines is that anything goes. Glue images together to create a collage, test your hand at calligraphy, add a poem, print out graphic designs or create your own drawings. Mireles usually tapes several cut-out images onto her paper so she likes to unfold it and make a color copy once her zine is complete. That way she can share a finished book that is one-dimensional. ★

FUTURE PAS DE DEUX



Ballet San Antonio will launch a professional school of ballet this summer with a virtual intensive taught by new artistic advisor Sofiane Sylve, who comes from the San Francisco Ballet, and guests. Sylve chats here about her vision for the school, which will be housed in the company's new headquarters starting this fall.

WHY DID YOU WANT TO ADD A SCHOOL TO BALLET SAN ANTONIO?

For kids, whether they become dancers professionally or not, the education of learning to show up on time, look neat and learn and retain choreography helps to build a good values system. The arts—whichever discipline you choose—is a wonderful education tool. Also, a lot of people don't believe dance can be a career, so this helps to show students that it can. We'd like for them to be able to attend company rehearsals and participate in shows (like *The Nutcracker*) and to show the next generation what being a professional dancer looks like. We also want to offer ballet for people from 2 years old to basically 102.

WILL THE COMPANY'S DANCERS TEACH?

Yes, I've written a curriculum that codifies each of the steps, how you talk about them and how you teach children to place their bodies, from their heads to their feet. A lot of our dancers teach already, but this is a bit of a reset button to say, 'This is why we do this or call this that.'

WHAT'S THE ULTIMATE GOAL FOR THE COMPANY?

We want a full-time company where dancers can perform and teach in the school and not have to go somewhere else to survive. Right now, everyone at Ballet San Antonio is a dancer part-time. We want to be a full-time company with an orchestra at every production. To register for classes or learn about the company's 2020-2021 season, visit balletsanantonio.org.

Q&A WITH KAY HARIG



KAY HARIG
Owner and CEO
OfficeSource, Ltd.

Q: What does a home office look like during COVID and what are individuals' immediate needs?

A: Prior to COVID-19, individuals did not have a proper home office set up. Some immediate needs include privacy screens, height-adjustable desks, improved lighting, increased storage and proper seating to maintain neutral posture. We have put together several packages specifically for home offices. Some are focused on stylish design and others on privacy and ergonomics elements. Currently employees have been working from impromptu areas in their households and are wanting to create a comfortable, ergonomic, yet private space to focus on work.

Q: What are you expecting to change in the office furniture industry?

A: We have seen shifts from open-floor concepts and collaborative spaces to include more spacing and ensure safety for employees. We have had requests for steam



cleaning for seating and panels. Some have heard about antimicrobial fabrics and how they can kill viruses, but they do not. Our team uses bleach to ensure proper cleaning and disinfecting. We are recommending bleach cleanable fabrics, but most existing fabrics are not. We are doing our best to stay up to date with other methods that will disinfect when we clean.

Other requests we've received are for glass or fabric mobile screens to separate people within an open workstation. Dividers are another method of splitting up spaces, they can be freestanding or work surface mounted. Recently the trend in the corporate sector has been to lower workstation panels, but we are now being asked to add glass stacks on panels to increase the panel height. We also have been asked to add mobile hand washing stations.

Q: How has OfficeSource, Ltd. adjusted during quarantine?

A: We have been very fortunate throughout this time and have not had any layoffs. Our team has been working from home, and have stayed in constant communication. We have continued working very hard and have maintained a steady workload. Many of our clients are considered essential businesses, like healthcare, education and military, so we have continued to install for them.



OfficeSource Ltd.

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Mindful Moments

Add some calm in your day through meditation or simply focus on your breathing

BY KATHLEEN PETTY



YOU CAN'T FAIL AT MEDITATION—EVEN IF YOUR mind wanders to what you're making for dinner or whether you paid the water bill this month.

"You will never fail," says Enrique Valdivia, a senior student at the San Antonio Zen Center. "It's just a matter of showing up and making the effort. The rest will come."

Valdivia began practicing meditation regularly about 10 years ago when he was going through some personal struggles and says while it does take dedication, it's something that's available to anyone. "I found it really beneficial as a form of self-discipline," he says. "It gave me a sense of

purpose and structure in my life."

Melissa Aguirre, of Boerne Yoga and MelMarie Yoga, agrees and says meditation and mindfulness of any kind is a helpful tool for stress relief and personal discovery, something she found people have been increasingly seeking as they face changes brought on by the events of 2020. "People often complain that their mind won't stop," says Aguirre, who is certified in therapeutic yoga and works with clients, including PTSD patients, on mindfulness. "That's OK. The practice is about coming back and building those positive cognitive pathways."

Keep it Casual

"You don't have to do a big complicated practice to have a moment of presence," Aguirre says. To start, she advises finding small moments throughout the day to practice mindfulness. Close your eyes and breathe the next time you're standing at the sink, take a midday break to sit down and massage your neck, or even just inhale deep breaths while near your favorite candle or essential oil. "Randomly practice throughout the day," she says.

Consider a Group

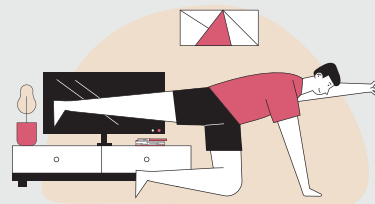
If beginning on your own seems daunting, Valdivia suggests considering group meditation. Initially, he attended teacher-guided meditations at the San Antonio Zen Center daily. Even when the center was closed due to COVID-19, he still joined a group from the center on Zoom three times a week. "For me, it's easier to pick up and stick with if you're with others," he says. When not in a group, consider apps like Insight Meditation or Headspace.

Focus on Your Breath

While she knows it sounds simple, Aguirre says wherever you're practicing, start by focusing on your breath. If you feel overwhelmed during the day, take a moment and intentionally lengthen your exhale, noticing how your demeanor may change as you continue paying attention to your breathing. "Look at your breath as a tool to access centeredness and feeling at peace," she says. If your mind wanders, that's ok. Bring it back and start again.

Attitude Matters

There are multiple types of meditation—from mindfulness like Aguirre discusses to chakra meditation that focuses on different energy centers in the body to yoga meditation, which integrates postures into your breathing practice. Regardless of which you pursue, Aguirre says to approach the practice with an attitude of grace and compassion. "Let things be as they are," she says. "We're giving ourselves permission to be human and not to be perfect." ★



3 WAYS TO WORKOUT FROM ANYWHERE

Gyms may have reopened but many fitness studios are keeping up their at-home exercise offerings

BY BIANCA TORRES

JKFITNESS

Sign up for digital virtual training and a trainer will customize a workout for you and send it to your email with descriptions, photos and videos to help you stay on track. Want more guidance? JKFitness also offers "live" digital training where you can meet with a trainer through your phone or tablet. jk-fit.com/virtual-training

MOBILE OM

Founder Cassandra Fauss shares multiple yoga and meditation practices on the studio's YouTube channel. Join her in a yoga practice she completed at home or in a video she recorded during group classes at Confluence Park and elsewhere. youtube.com/user/cassandralane

SMART BARRE

Members of this women's fitness studio not only have access to classes at each physical location but also to on-demand virtual workouts they can complete at home or while on the road in another state. smartbarresa.com

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Meaningful Pursuits

Spurs' Rudy Gay tests his hand at a style line while staying in shape for the return of pro sports

BY KATHLEEN PETTY

W

hen it comes to style, Rudy Gay and his kids agree on at least one thing: comfort reigns.

The Spurs forward released a merch line, RG22, earlier this year. The design of each piece is inspired by something from his life or career, and his fabric and fit choices were all made based on what he would actually wear. "Kids won't wear everything," he says, explaining a lesson he learned when working with Superism on his children's line in 2018. "Personally, I wouldn't wear everything either, so you have to make sure it's comfortable."

His RG22 Angelic Sweatpants, for example, are made with 100 percent French terry cotton. Denim patchwork angels were added to the pants based on two tattoos Gay has on his arms in honor of his sons, 5-year-old Clint and 4-year-old Dean. A cotton Ol' St. Mike Tee with an image of St. Michael the Archangel also is based on one of Gay's tattoos. "Honestly, it's just about being creative," Gay says.

Basketball has long been and remains Gay's primary passion and focus, "obviously," he says. But he's had a side interest in fashion since he was a kid, sparked largely, he says, by his sisters and cousins who were "always trying to be into the latest stuff" and by music videos they all watched growing up in Baltimore. "My dad told me one time when I was growing up, if you want something and we aren't going to buy it for you, make it," he says.

Gay channeled that directive into his clothing line, which includes T-shirts, shorts, hoodies and sweatpants, all available online for now. If it's well received, Gay says the merch may grow and even be offered in local stores. Ultimately, though, he says it's an outlet for personal expression.

Named one of *Sports Illustrated's* Fashionable 50 in 2019 for his choice of vibrant colors, Gay's reputation as someone with an eye for style has grown since he joined the Spurs in 2017. He attended Fashion Weeks in Milan and New York City during the last year and even walked as part of a Romeo Hunte show in New York.

The 33-year-old downplays the attention, adding that he selects looks for leaving the locker room based partly on the climate outside. He anticipated spending the spring helping the Spurs make their final push for an NBA Playoff spot, but instead transitioned to training from home, helping his wife homeschool and entertain their boys and bingeing the occasional Apple TV show—all while remaining comfortable stylish. ★

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15 Seconds of Fame

Local teens dream of digital stardom—and dollar signs—on the latest social media craze, TikTok

BY KIKO MARTINEZ

When San Antonio resident Krystal Kay joined TikTok in late 2018, she never would have imagined that 19 months later, more than 172,000 people online would be following what she calls “her mundane life.”

The social media platform that allows users to share short video clips—usually 15 seconds—with anyone in the world now has 800 million active users across the globe (and TikTok added 12 million unique visitors from the U.S. during the start of COVID-19 quarantine in March, according to data from Comscore). Forty-one percent of those users are between the ages of 16 and 24.

In San Antonio, there are a handful of TikTok users who have a healthy virtual following. The most popular, Adam Martinez (@adamrayokay), has amassed 6.1 million followers for his videos that feature his alter ego, Rosa, sharing her beauty routine, details about her dating life and more. While some

are simply doing it for fun, especially during these past few months when people were starved for entertainment while staying at home due to the pandemic, others have learned how to monetize their personal brand and now envision their TikTok fame leading them to bigger things.

Kay’s following on TikTok grew when she started talking about her experiences with customers while working at a local Cricket Wireless store. One included a woman demanding that Kay delete any incriminating evidence of her infidelity from her cell phone.

“I figured TikTok would be a good way to vent about customers,” says Kay, 26, known as @sweetsyn on the platform. “I could tell my boyfriend was tired of hearing me complain every day when we drove home.”

No longer employed at Cricket, Kay is using her popularity on the platform to sell her arts and crafts on Etsy. “TikTok can be an amazing place,” she says. “These days, most people

have very short attention spans. Short videos are straight to the point and an escape from reality."

San Antonio teenager Gabriel Salazar, who just finished his junior year at Wagner High School, started using TikTok when he moved to the Alamo City from Brownsville two years ago and wanted to make friends.

How does 692,000 of them sound? That is how many followers Salazar has gained during his time on the platform. Most of his content consists of him lip syncing to rappers like Lil Skies and Shoreline Mafia. He hopes his status on TikTok can translate to a successful YouTube channel where he could make a career as a content creator.

"I never thought I'd be where I am, but I am so thankful for all my followers," says Salazar, 18, who goes by the name @gabbenotbabe on TikTok. "Everyone wants the hype. TikTok definitely has the power to get you that."

That coveted hype "is the new teenage popularity contest," says Jennifer Jacobs Henderson, chair of the Department of Communication at Trinity University. But like with most roads that lead to any level of fame, Henderson says it usually comes down to how much money corporations can make on the next hot trend.

"You become a TikTok multimillionaire not because you are talented or beautiful or funny but because you have done something to connect audiences to advertisers—to convert young people into potential purchasers," Henderson says. "This is not new, but ... the process is now on digital steroids."

If "digital steroids" is what keeps TikTok users strong, then local dancer and hip-hop artist Deyanira Magaña, aka @paradiisedd, is an up-and-coming social media beast. She may not have as many followers as TikTok's most popular user, Connecticut-based Charli D'Amelio with 56.2 million, but Magaña's 1.7 million is still impressive.

"I actually got made fun of for using TikTok," Magaña, 18, says. "Everyone at my school thought it was cringy."

Whether or not her classmates still think TikTok is cringeworthy, Magaña has made it her part-time career and while she won't disclose exactly what it brings in, she says she is making "a great amount of money per TikTok video." She also has her own podcast with local radio station Energy 94.1 and she released a single in May with Gabby Annalyse called "Pretty Bitches."

"I want to do it all—acting, singing, dancing and my own clothing and makeup lines," she says. "I feel TikTok has the power to flourish for years." ★

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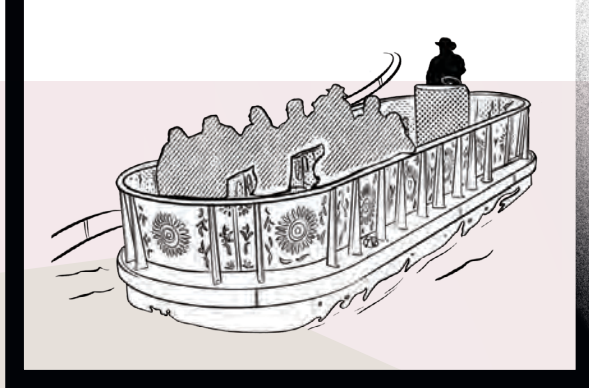
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**INTERVIEWS BY
REBECCA FONTENOT CORD,
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“We exude good.”

DIEGO BERNAL

“I still believe in the common good, the greater good and the goodness of people. As a community, we have not become cynical in the way some big cities have. People here are good—they honor good and they expect good. It’s a trait and a requirement. It gives me a lot of faith. San Antonio as a city has never let me down. You can be frustrated at certain things and I can get discouraged, but it’s never let me down,” says Bernal, representative for Texas House District 123. On the other hand, he jokes, “You can also erase everything I said and just put ‘The Spurs’.”



BERNAL: COURTESY HIMSELF; FELIZ MODERN: COURTESY GINGER DIAZ; CAPPY'S: KEVIN GIEL



Care & Creativity

GINGER DIAZ

“WHAT WE LOVE MOST about San Antonio is the care we have for our neighbors, and the richness of the home-grown talent here,” says Ginger Diaz, co-owner of Feliz Modern and Feliz Modern Pop. “These are some of our favorite local themed items from local artists that we carry at Feliz Modern. We are a city that is rich in the most important things: family, art and culture.”

Family Traditions

CAPPY LAWTON

BORN AND RAISED IN SAN ANTONIO, THE Lawton family believes in preserving history and family traditions. Nowhere is this more evident than in the three restaurants they currently own and operate: Cappy's, Cappycinos and La Fonda on Main, where generations of the same families have gathered for years both for the cuisine and the camaraderie.

“It’s fun to be part of a community where people have known each other for decades,” says Cappy, who lives with his wife Susie on the same street where he grew up. “The people here are genuine and loyal.”

But just as they love tradition, the Lawtons understand that change is inevitable and, During COVID19, they had to rethink their daily operations. Not only did Lawton want to keep as many people employed as possible, he also wanted to continue providing his loyal customers with the food they loved. He, along with the help of son, Trevor, introduced Cappy's curbside at the popular Alamo Heights eatery, and a new tradition was born. “We had not done much takeout before, but the curbside really took off,” Lawton says. “I think it will stay around for a while.”





Its authenticity is unmatched.

NATALIA PRIETO

WHEN NATALIA PRIETO'S parents told her they were moving from Brazil to Texas in 2001 so her dad could take a position as a church pastor, she thought "it sounded awful." It didn't take long for San Antonio to prove her wrong. "You have this idea of Americans being distant and not embracing that Latin culture we were used to," she says. "When we arrived at the airport, there were 30 people from the church with signs and gifts and they took us to Jim's for our first meal in the U.S. I don't think we would have received that greeting anywhere else."

A public relations pro at Giant Noise, Prieto attended the University of Texas at Austin and then lived in New York before returning in 2013 to San Antonio, where her parents and brother still live. Along with immersing herself anew in a city she found was growing and developing, Prieto found a place where young professionals had the chance to contribute to the changes taking place—all while still being true to themselves. Whether that's because so many San Antonians have roots here or because there's a level of comfort in SA not found elsewhere, Prieto says the San Antonio of her childhood and adulthood is marked by its ability to foster authenticity. "You don't get that anywhere else," she says. "In San Antonio, people grow up here and stay here and you don't really see that in Austin and elsewhere. It's refreshing to be in a city where people can talk about the taco spots their families went when they were young and where there are so many opportunities to be a part of the community."

Looking to tap into that authentic San Antonio? Prieto offers three tips for getting involved in the city.

Find something you're passionate about.

Whether that's technology (look into TechBloc), public speaking (consider TEDxSanAntonio), animals or children's welfare, Prieto points to the city's robust nonprofit scene that is welcoming to newcomers.

Make connections in that community.

Prieto says you can start forming relationships with a simple Instagram or Facebook message, by attending an event or making a call. She started attending PechaKucha and found she loved the speaker series so much that she now volunteers with the organizers.

Follow through. Once you've connected, stay involved. Prieto says she's found San Antonio leaders are open to hearing from young professionals about the changes and initiatives they want to see and be a part of. Whether you volunteer to walk dogs, advocate for your industry or get involved in board service, giving back is a great way to fall in love with your community.

Creatives collaborate.

DANIEL ANASTASIO

"EVERYONE HERE IS SUPER OPEN and able to be vulnerable and creative and collaborate and that is ultimately what I really love about San Antonio—it's an environment that breeds creativity because people are so open and humble and willing to be vulnerable, meaning no one really has their guard up," says Daniel Anastasio, a pianist and full-time instructor of music at San Antonio College. Anastasio grew up in San Antonio and then studied music at Cornell University, Juilliard and Stony Brook University, where he is a candidate for his Ph.D., before returning in 2018. Shortly after moving home, he connected with Marisa Bushman as she was forming the nonprofit chamber music group Agarita, which is based on the idea of collaboration. In its public concerts, which moved online during COVID-19, the musicians partner with artists of other mediums (dancers, lighting artists, fashion designers) who perform alongside the live classical music. "With social media and infinite online options, having a real human connection has become more of a rare commodity and I have found an abundance of these real connections here in San Antonio," he says. "It's the perfect breeding ground for an artist or anyone who wants to pursue their passion."



"I love San Antonio so much I want to marry it."

MICHAEL QUINTANILLA

ships. It taught me everything. It's the place that sent me away and brought me back."

This South Sider's love for SA runs deep. Along with being a native, he's known for his fashion reporting at the *San Antonio Express-News*, from where he retired in 2015 after a 40-year career, and for his grandiose Fiesta hats that earned him the title of "Mr. Fiesta," but Quintanilla says San Antonio is more than those things to him. It's the place that shaped him and the place that embraces him as he continuously showcases his San Antonio pride with personality and authentic gratitude.

"...How much more committed can you be? It's my hometown. It's the place where I learned everything—where I got my education and where I grew up with my mom. It's the place that gives me life, that gave me friend-



“It’s a scavenger hunt of history.”

LYNN OSBORNE BOBBITT

THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF BRACKENRIDGE PARK CONSERVANCY, Lynn Osborne Bobbitt knows it will come as no surprise that San Antonio’s history is part of what she loves most about her hometown. Her mother was the city’s first historic preservation officer while her father was a photographer for the *San Antonio Light* for nearly three decades, so she spent much of her childhood learning about—and experiencing—the city. “I grew up with a family that was out enjoying what the city had to offer. Particularly, Brackenridge was where we went to be outdoors,” she says, adding that she had birthday parties in the park, spent Saturday afternoons in paddle boats and even went horseback riding there.

Like her mother, Bobbitt got involved in preservation work while in college at the University of Texas at Austin and eventually became president of the San Antonio Conservation Society.

At Brackenridge Park, Bobbitt says she’s found a place that is a microcosm of all that’s great about San Antonio. The land has a long history—human habitation has been documented on its grounds as far back as 12,000 years ago and a dam and acequia that still exist were first constructed in 1776 to provide water for agriculture at the Villa San Fernando settlement—and it’s a place that was shaped by the multicultural fabric of the city. “It really encapsulates the development and history of San Antonio,” she says. “San Antonio really is a scavenger hunt of history.”

That doesn’t mean it’s always been positive. There was a time when African Americans weren’t permitted in the park. In 1942, the family that operated the original Japanese Tea Garden was evicted due to anti-Japanese sentiment during World War II and the space renamed the Chinese Sunken Garden for a time. “We’ve made some mistakes and we recognize that and that’s another reason for understanding our history,” she says.



Brackenridge Park and its long history, from the the Brackenridge Eagle Train (now the Zoo Eagle) that opened in 1956 to the Sky Ride that operated in the 1960s to paddle boats on the river, is part of what Lynn Osborne Bobbitt loves most about San Antonio.

“We’re in this together.”

MAGALY CHOCANO

You may know it as the slogan for the citywide fundraising effort San Antonio entrepreneur Magaly launched as a result of COVID-19, but “In This Together,” is more than an Instagram hashtag—it is the main reason that the founder of SWEB Development loves the Alamo City.

“There is such a camaraderie here, you never feel alone,” says the mom of two whose “In This Together,” movement raised more than \$130,000 in eight weeks, helping more than 40 businesses stay afloat during the process. For Chocano, whose own business burned to the ground just two weeks before the pandemic shut down the city, it was an act of gratitude.

“There was just this outpouring of support from the community after the fire,” Chocano says. Weston Urban gave her staff office space, restaurants including Los Barrios and Whataburger provided meals for her team, and JoyRide Cycling and Fitness gave her employees a month of free classes.

“I couldn’t believe it, and I just couldn’t thank anyone enough,” she says. “This was a way to pay it forward.”

Through the sales of “In This Together,” T-shirts and facemasks, Chocano was able to purchase gift cards in bulk from local retailers and restaurants, which were then distributed among nonprofits and frontline workers. It was a win/win for everyone, and a way for the Madrid, Spain, native to help the city that has helped her realize her own dreams for the past 16 years.

“It’s crazy the way people will support you here in San Antonio,” she says. “It’s so easy to get connected and people are always willing to help.”



SA is Amor.

MARTHA MARTINEZ FLORES

BORN IN CHICAGO AND RAISED in Central Mexico, Martha Martinez Flores always imagined growing her career in the big city. Her family had lived near Wrigley Field before moving to Mexico and she returned to attend college with the intention of sticking around. Her husband Mike Flores, now president of Alamo Colleges, agreed that he loved the Midwest but took a meeting with Alamo Colleges while in San Antonio visiting family one holiday just to hear about the opportunity. "I was not happy about it, but I said, 'Let's give it a try,'" Martinez Flores says. "We agreed to stay for three years before going back to Chicago...It's been 21 years. Now there's no other place I would rather be."

Flores continued to advance in his career with the college system while Martinez Flores forged a career with a focus on Hispanic advertising campaigns for brands like Coca-Cola. She's now the creative director of her own business, MM Creative, and has long been involved in the community through SAY Si, the San Antonio Hispanic Chamber and elsewhere. She still likes to visit Chicago, but says the culture and heritage of San Antonio reminds her of her home in Mexico and is the ideal place to raise their two daughters. "In Chicago, you're part of a giant melting pot," she says. "The big difference I notice as a Latina and as someone with Mexican descent is that when you come here, the culture is really part of the DNA of the city. It's a big city with a sense of community that really celebrates its heritage."



A LIMITED NUMBER OF PRINTS OF MARTINEZ FLORES' "SA IS AMOR" ARE AVAILABLE AT FELIZ MODERN AND FELIZ MODERN.COM. ALL PROCEEDS WILL GO TO ALAMO COLLEGES' COVID-19 STUDENT IMPACT FUND AND SAISD'S BONHAM ACADEMY FOOD AND SUPPLY FUND.

"We have a tremendous capacity for compassion, caring and courage."

JUDGE PETER SAKAI

While Judge Peter Sakai works to find solutions to challenges of child abuse and neglect and domestic violence, he experiences the power of the community on a regular basis. "We are a very sensitive and compassionate community that addresses these issues," he says. "I think one of our strengths is that we come together and work in collaboration." This collaboration happens when San Antonians partner with businesses, political leaders and even athletes such as Spurs player Patty Mills (who recently led a social media initiative that raised over \$100,000 for Family Violence & Prevention Services) to support the vulnerable populations in our city. "There are so many people who care," Sakai says. "We come together, and we'll always come together. I don't think there's anything in this community that we can't take on, resolve and fix."



The Integration of the Natural and Built Environments

SHERRY KAFKA WAGNER

IF SHERRY KAFKA WAGNER hadn't been invited to give a talk at Trinity University in 1966, she might never have found San Antonio. Developers for the 1968 World's Fair heard Wagner's speech that day and offered her a job developing HemisFair for the event. "I really had never been to San Antonio before that," she says. "I remember being struck by the integration of the natural environment and the built environment. I really loved that."

The Arkansas native who'd been living in Fort Worth accepted the position and found a love for urban design that led her to working on the San Antonio River (with her husband, Cy Wagner, an urban designer/architect who worked on the River Walk) and other projects. While working downtown in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Wagner says she loved walking from meetings to the library to her office, often hopping on the River Walk to get to her destination and knowing no matter where she was downtown that the water was never far.

"Every day I would kind of have that sense of being in the city, and yet not being separate from the natural world," says Wagner, who left San Antonio in 1974 and visited frequently before moving back full-time in 2000. "Especially as a country girl, I was so happy when I got to San Antonio because I love urban life, but I also didn't have to give up the joy of the natural world."

The river has served as inspiration for urban planners in San Antonio's recent decades as well as for San Antonians who went on to develop in other cities.

Wagner points to San Antonio's Elizabeth "Betsy" Barlow Rogers, who created the Central Park Conservancy in 1980. Robert Hammond, also a San Antonio native, was one of the developers of the High Line, a park created on old freight rail tracks in Manhattan, and San Antonian Warrie Price was involved in the development of the city's Battery City Park. "That's something for us to be proud of," she says.

Back home, Wagner has enjoyed watching the River Walk continue to develop and says she never takes for granted the ability to walk in an oasis created just steps from the heart of the city.

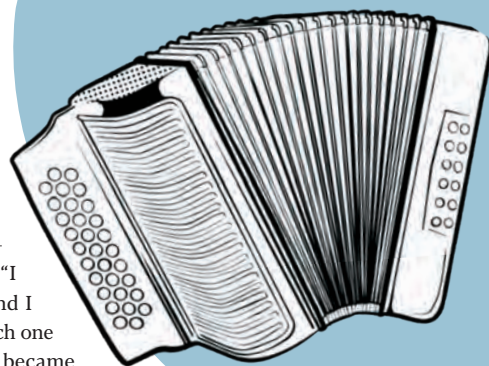
"One of the things that's distinctive about the River Walk that is not valued enough is that it's a micro-climate. It's below our natural surface level and as a consequence of being there, plants can grow that would not prosper on the soil above. That's allowed for us to have a pretty amazing kind of world," she says. "Wherever you go on the River Walk, you can look up and see some presence of the built environment and still be in touch with nature."

Hospitality

AARON PEÑA

SOUTH SAN ANTONIO NATIVE

Aaron Peña found the hospitality industry by accident. "I had an office job in my 20s and I hated it," he says. "I went to lunch one day and never went back." He became a bartender instead and after working in the industry and traveling in his 20s, Peña opened his own bar, The Squeezebox, four years ago this month. "Traveling helped me appreciate what home had to offer," Peña says, adding that he fell in love with New Orleans, the Bay Area and New York but also found he always wanted to keep roots in San Antonio. With the growth in the restaurant and bar scene in the last seven years, Peña says he looks forward to the annual San Antonio Cocktail Conference each year so he can show off to industry peers what San Antonio has to offer. "We have all of these great bars and chefs that reflect our city," he says. "Plus, the industry, the people, are very warm and welcoming."



3 of Peña's
Favorite Places
to Experience
San Antonio
Hospitality

Sanchez Ice House

The Cookhouse

The Esquire Tavern



The community takes care of one another.

RAFAEL GONZALES JR.

RAFAEL GONZALES JR., A GRAPHIC DESIGNER and lab manager at the University of the Incarnate Word Feik School of Pharmacy, relied mostly on humor when drawing cards for a pandemic loteria game he created this spring during COVID-19. But he also created one card that he says perfectly encapsulates what he loves most about his hometown, the "Los Folklores" card. Inspired by Folklores Coffeehouse owners Tatu and Emily Herrera, the card is a tribute to the entrepreneurs' willingness to give, even as their own business was negatively impacted by the pandemic. With the help of donations from the community and their own supplies and funds, the couple and a group of volunteers delivered food and basic supplies to as many as 500 senior citizens in San Antonio each week for more than three months. "What they did was amazing," Gonzales says.



Inspiration is everywhere.

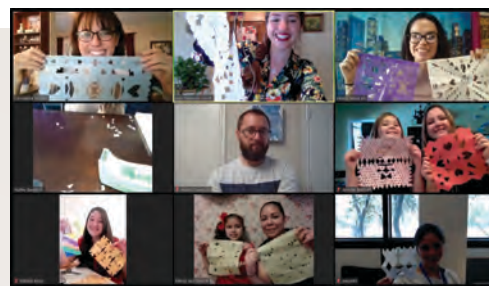
VANESSA BESSLER

and that is so invigorating and enriching as an artist. I feel that no matter where I go, I have to come back to San Antonio. It has become the strongest source of inspiration for me."

As the founder of the Children's Ballet of San Antonio, Bessler has been impressed by the supportive community and by instructors. "We take the diversity of old and new, heritage and tradition, to stage. San Antonio is where I have been motivated and inspired to change and do twists of classical masterpieces," Bessler says.

Vanessa Bessler has lived across the globe—from her home country of Panama to New York City, Milan, Havana, Buenos Aires and Miami. Yet the people and passion of this city have left an impression on her that is unmatched. "San Antonio is a big city with a lot of people, but it's filled with the soul of a small town," Bessler says.

"There is tradition, heritage and diversity—a welcoming of the old and the new—



It feels like family.

CONSTANZA ROEDER

WHEN CONSTANZA ROEDER TRAVELS BACK to her home state of California, people are friendly, sure, but it's just not like San Antonio. As soon as she steps on an elevator here "everyone chit-chats and is friends right away," she says.

The founder and CEO of Hearts Need Art, Roeder based her organization on the idea of connection, so she loves being in a city that understands the importance of relationships. Hearts Need Art partners with Methodist Healthcare to connect oncology and other patients experiencing isolation with artists who will perform mini-concerts or teach drawing, writing or other mediums (programs continued via Zoom during COVID-19).

Roeder started the nonprofit based on her own experience of isolation as a teenager battling leukemia. She moved to San Antonio 12 years ago when her husband was stationed here with the Navy, and when he finished his service, the couple decided to stay. "Y'all are stuck with us," she says. "Everyone is just so friendly and warm and it feels like family."

"San Antonio makes you make it home. The support system we've been able to build here has changed our lives. We're happy to be growing our family here."

Lattoia & Cornelius Massey, owners, The Jerk Shack & Mi Roti; proud parents of 2-month-old Champion



'Weeping Post'

BY ANDREA 'VOCAB' SANDERSON

My city is a
sanctuary site
burial ground (un)
forgotten by
sojourners.

Ashes stir, bones live
again, resurrected
vibrantly.

We don't have to
bury our memories
too deeply here.

Our every breath
is a monument to
laborers.

Missionaries and
migrants that wept
prayers in every
language
are still converting
transplants to find
shelter and
permanence.

My city says you
belong here now.

—Andrea "Vocab"
Sanderson

Sanderson, San Antonio's 2020-2023 Poet Laureate and a spoken word artist, performs across the nation and leads community poetry organizations such as 2nd Verse, an open mic poetry venue, and Fresh Ink Youth Slam.



The Neighborhood Feel

JANE GENNARELLI AND JIM FEUERSTEIN

IT'S A COMMON REFRAIN THAT SAN ANTONIO is a big city with a small town feel, and that's just what Jane Gennarelli and Jim Feuerstein love most, particularly as it is embodied in the Lavaca/King William neighborhood. The friends and colleagues moved to San Antonio 25 years ago but didn't expect to stay long. As terms on the sale of Feuerstein's New York City-area company to a local firm, they agreed to move to San Antonio for a transitional period. They each settled first in the "suburbs" of San Antonio but quickly missed the urban environment they knew and loved from living in cosmopolitans around the country. They began visiting Lavaca and King William on First Fridays and fell in love with the neighborhood. Feuerstein moved there in 2005 and Gennarelli followed the next year. In 2010, Gennarelli and Feuerstein began organizing a small weekly happy hour with neighbors. Gennarelli's weekly email reminder about the happy hour soon turned into a newsletter that also highlights nearby events. The Lavaca and Friends newsletter now has subscribers far beyond the actual neighborhood boundaries and (pre-pandemic) included around 100 events each week in all the downtown neighborhoods. Earlier this year, it expanded with a website, lavaca-and-friends.com. The happy hours have grown too and until COVID-19 closures were held weekly at Liberty Bar.

"We've got a lot of experience to compare and I don't think either of us has ever lived somewhere that we enjoy as much as this neighborhood," Feuerstein says. "It's walkable. We consider Liberty Bar our living room because we go a couple of times a week. We have breakfast at Tito's."

The duo takes daily walks with Gennarelli's dog, Micky, and frequently end up at a local restaurant, bar or cafe. "We know the staff. We know the owners. It's a great neighborhood with a lot of small businesses and family businesses," Gennarelli says. "You walk into one of these places and it's unusual to not see people that you know... It's not just that we know people. The people in this neighborhood socialize with each other—a lot of them do. It's not just neighbors, they're friends, as well. Which is nice. I remember as a kid growing up, neighborhoods were like that—my neighborhood was like that, but I haven't felt that kind of neighborhood spirit anywhere else I've lived as an adult until moving here."

5 of Jane Gennarelli & Jim Feuerstein's Fave Neighborhood Spots

Tito's Mexican Restaurant

"Tito's is where we go for morning breakfast tacos—chorizo and egg, potato and egg, bean and bacon. Micky likes the sidewalk seating."

Lowcountry

"This is a funky little craft cocktail place, an old house that's been converted into a bar."

Liberty Bar

"Liberty Bar is our home away from home. It's where we head after a long workday when we're too tired to cook. We come for the comfort food, the comfort vibe, and the likelihood that we'll run into neighbors."

River Walk, South of Downtown

"In our neighborhood, the River Walk feels more like a park. Great for walkers, joggers and cyclists. We like to stop for coffee at Halcyon."

Southtown Pizzeria

"Yes, this little place does have pizza (including a great New York-style option). However, we like it because it's got terrific Italian food."

It honors its history while looking ahead.

RYAN BADGER

"I moved here in 2015 and I found such an appreciation and a passion for the history of the area—and not just people working to protect their heritage but also to work together to try and improve their city. I've been astounded by how much the city has changed and the trajectory it's on. I admire that devotion to the history, that devotion to the past and that forward-looking vision."—Ryan Badger, curator of collections at the Briscoe Western Art Museum, who moved to San Antonio in 2015 for a position at the Alamo

“We found love here. It’s not just between each other. People actually show love to us and each other. We’ll make a milestone—or even when we go missing from social media—and people will call us to congratulate us or check in to see how we are doing. It’s definitely a trend to do things out of love. This city is full of love and they share it freely. It’s refreshing.”

Christian & Uchennaya Ogba, co-founders,
EHCÜ Public Relations



Relentless Nostalgia

REX HAUSMANN

PAINTER REX HAUSMANN HAS shown work in New York, France and other art meccas, but the San Antonio native says there’s nowhere else he’d call home. “It was good enough for my mom and dad,

my granddad. It’s good enough for me,” he says. One of Hausmann’s first paintings as a teen was of his grandfather’s 1953 Chevy truck, and he’s returned to the subject matter many times throughout his career. “Hang around any group of car fanatics and nostalgia is a big part of (the appeal),” he says. “I’ve described San Antonio as relentless nostalgia, so I think every time I work on a car, I think of San Antonio.” His love of the city is as intertwined with family as is the draw of old trucks. While at his home studio during March’s quarantine, Hausmann began working on a series of truck drawings for his nephew, including one of Hausmann’s dad Gene Hausmann’s truck, featuring the logo of the family’s Hausmann Millworks artist collective. Calling them “A Twuck for Peanut,” he also wrote a letter to the young boy reminiscing and imparting wisdom about the metaphor of fixing up a car. “When something is in disrepair, you try your best to fix it,” he writes. “... The way in which you fix something or work toward something is as important as the thing itself. The people who help get you where you are going are the real gem in the process.”



In SA, architectural heritage meets bold creative visions.

TIM BLONKVIST

“THE SAN ANTONIO RIVER IS THE LIFEBLOOD of our community, tying our historic architectural heritage together with a bold new creative vision while providing a model for inspiration to other cities around the world,” says Tim Blonkvist, FAIA, founding principal and board chairman at Overland Partners. Blonkvist first visited San Antonio when he was in college and was immediately drawn to the river and the city’s historical roots. When he and his wife decided to move here 35 years ago after living in New York City and working on large projects around the world with I.M. Pei, he remembered all he had initially loved in San Antonio and decided that it was the best choice in Texas. “The diversity of people and culture creates such a rich tapestry and ideal place to raise a family,” he says. “San Antonio is also more interesting architecturally than most cities in Texas. There’s history in its roots. There is this wonderful sensitivity that this city has toward architecture, planning, urban renewal, such as the redevelopment of the river, and the passion for the restoration of our older structures.” He has been able to play a part in this restoration as he and others at Overland Partners “integrate the new architecture of our time into the old fabric of the city, breathing new life into buildings such as the old Lone Star Brewery positioned along the San Antonio River into what is now the San Antonio Museum of Art.” As these projects, specifically along the river, develop, others around the world are taking notice. “We have taken the precedents and inspiration of our River Walk around the world to places like our sister city Wuxi, China, and a dozen other cities across China, building relationships around the world and sharing the character and spirit of San Antonio.”

“There is a real sense of community.”

ANGELA MARTINEZ

WHEN ANGELA AND RICK MARTINEZ launched their outdoor movie organization, Slab Cinema, 15 years ago, it was created solely out of the desire to bring people together and gather over a love of film. It started with outdoor movie nights at La Tuna and then at Hemisfair, Angela Martinez says, and has grown to show around 200 movies each season at locations throughout the city and its surrounding area—each event creating space for the community to make memories together, whether a night out with the family, a first date or even marriage proposals. When the 2020 season was temporarily cut short in March because of COVID-19, Martinez searched for a new way to support and highlight the sense of community in the city, even if from a distance. She launched “Porch Photo Project” where she goes to people’s homes to photograph them at their doorstep and to listen to bits of their story. “It’s been a wonderful mix of meeting people and connecting,” Martinez says. “I love San Antonio’s community and the way everyone comes together... Even though San Antonio is a big city, it’s really a small town.”



Outdoor Adventures

VALERIE GRANT

"BEFORE MOVING TO SAN ANTONIO 14 YEARS AGO, I had been living in Dallas after graduating from Baylor. A South Texas girl at heart (having grown up in the Valley) my friends and then-boyfriend/now-husband, Mick, and I often traveled to San Antonio, Austin and the Hill Country region to explore our favorite parts of Texas. We would take weekend trips as often as we could, camping in the fall, kayaking and tubing in the summer and staying in-town with friends who lived here. We vowed to eventually put down our roots in the area.

Soon after getting married, Mick received an offer in San Antonio while I received an offer in Austin. We chose SA and never looked back.

After our first night in our 1940s bungalow in Alta Vista, I was awoken by the sound of white wing doves singing in the bamboo grove just outside our window. It was an all too familiar sound and it felt like home.

After starting our family, we spent much of our time picnicking on the grounds at Landa Library. Once they were bigger, we biked to Brackenridge Park and then onto the newly extended museum reach of the River Walk. We would later do the same and explore the Mission Reach—we loved being able to go on outdoor day excursions within the city limits.

We now live in Churchill Estates, where we are watching the Salado Creek Greenway grow and grow. We can't wait for the Wurzbach Parkway land bridge at Hardberger Park to be complete. From our house, we can hop onto the greenway and visit Hardberger Park, Eisenhower Park, McAllister Park, Walker Ranch Park, Lady Bird Johnson Park and on and on.

And what was previously a full weekend trip for us from Big D, is now just a quick day trip down the road. All those friends still living in Dallas and elsewhere, now come to visit us in SA so we can continue to explore our favorite Texas hot spots."

—Valerie H. Grant, founder and CEO, Grant House Communications



Valerie's Favorite Day Trips

Guadalupe River State Park

"Take a quick 30-minute drive up Blanco Road to Guadalupe River State Park. We like to go early to avoid the crowds and pack a lunch, toss in a fishing pole, camping chairs, frisbees and tubes or rafts for the kids. Then we can float, walk upriver and repeat. There are also river outfitters upriver that will pick up at the park or you can always bring your own."

Blue Hole

"The grounds were renovated several years ago, and it is a wonderful way to cool down during the summer. Make reservations or go early as they only allow so many into the grounds at a time. After a day of swimming, head into the nearby town of Wimberley to grab some ice cream with the kiddos or a meal and a beer."

Jacob's Well Natural Area

"Another great way to cool off. A bucket list item for many Texans and just a short 1 1/2-hour drive. This one also gets crowded so make reservations in advance."

Paradise Canyon

"We just discovered Paradise Canyon last year. We were able to make a last-minute camping reservation over Memorial Day weekend and snagged one of the best spots right along the river. Since it is not a state park, it is not as well-known, but it is a fantastic destination for swimming and getting the family outdoors."

Old Tunnel State Park

"We've gone to watch the Mexican Freetail bat flights here. There is also an iconic burger restaurant, Alamo Springs General Store and Café, that shares the same parking lot."

Enchanted Rock State Natural Area, Garner State Park and Pedernales State Park

"All fantastic for hiking, camping, tubing—simply getting outdoors!"

Gruene, Fredericksburg, Luckenbach and Boerne

"There are so many fantastic Hill Country towns to explore nearby." ★

"You are never alone."

LISA MIELE

As director of the Low Vision Resource Center and Owl Radio, Lisa Miele has felt San Antonians' support firsthand through the many volunteers and supporters of her nonprofit's around-the-clock programming specifically made for the blind and visually impaired. When Miele and her husband moved to San Antonio in 1998, she says, "It was almost like coming home. Everyone was so friendly." Miele has found that big companies and individuals alike go out of their way to embrace different cultures, generations and abilities. "No matter where you go, people are lifting each other up... I've never felt so much love as I have in San Antonio."

GREAT

Leon Creek Greenway on the
Northwest Side, near Helotes





PLACES

IF COVID-19 TAUGHT US ANYTHING, IT'S THAT WHERE WE LIVE MATTERS. WE SIFTED THROUGH DATA FROM THE SAN ANTONIO BOARD OF REALTORS AND TALKED WITH REAL ESTATE AGENTS AND HOMEOWNERS TO HIGHLIGHT THE NEIGHBORHOODS—THROUGHOUT EVERY SIDE OF SAN ANTONIO—WHERE LOCALS WANT TO LIVE RIGHT NOW, PLUS ONE NEARBY TOWN THAT'S WORTH THE COMMUTE

TO LIVE

BY KATHLEEN PETTY
FAMILY PHOTOS BY KAT CAREY
DRONE PHOTOS BY ASHTON RODGERS

The State of the Market: Holding On and Hoping

Like the entire country, San Antonio is experiencing double-digit unemployment, but experts say it might not be as bad for home sales as you think

Jim Gaines is in the business of predictions.

The chief economist and Ph.D. at Texas A&M University Real Estate Center has over three decades of experience in the housing industry and typically can predict—based on sales data, housing supply and demand and other economic models—what summer home sales might look like in any of the state's metropolitan areas. This year, he says, absent a crystal ball, there's no way to know. "There are no models to predict what's going to happen here," he says.

Still, Gaines says early indications are that it may not be as bad for the housing market as one might think.

As soon as San Antonio and other major cities implemented "stay home" orders in March, Gaines says they thought activity would slow to near zero. The volume of homes selling did fall—sales in April, the latest data available, were down 9.6 percent from the year before in San Antonio—but the average price of homes selling went up. And, plenty of people are still looking to buy.

In San Antonio, Gaines says the home market has been stable for the past eight or nine years and while its hospitality industry took a major hit due to COVID-19, those jobs likely will return faster than some others, and it's not the only industry fueling the area. "In the last 10 years, San Antonio has also developed a lot of business and economic activity that is not government or tourism," Gaines says. "It's been a very good market."

San Antonio Board of Realtors chairman Kim Bragman agrees. Statewide, home sales fell 18.7 percent in April—nearly double what San Antonio saw, which indicates that the area is well-positioned to weather the impacts of COVID-19. "We feel like as people are able to move around more, we'll see an increase in activity," she said this spring.

Craig Owen, operating principal at Keller Williams Heritage, says local data indicates that while home showings were down 46 percent from the year before in April, they skyrocketed as soon as things began to open. Demand is still there, he says. "This has brought new meaning to home ownership and made it more valuable," Owen says.

He and Lisa Munoz, the corporate broker for Keller Williams Heritage, both concede that with the city's unemployment rate surpassing 13 percent in April, there's no way for there not to be at least some impact on the industry in the months to come. Munoz adds that some buyers and sellers who are still in a position to move simply decided to wait amid COVID-19, which led to a drop in inventory.

Those factors may mean summer 2020 doesn't look like summer 2019 did when it comes to local home sales. But, Gaines points out, 2019 was a particularly strong year so even if sales don't match last year, they could still be strong.

"I'm hopeful the housing market is going to rebound and maybe be an economic leader for Texas and San Antonio," Gaines says. "That's a hope right now, it's not really a prediction."

OUTSIDE LOOP 1604



FAR NORTH

Downtown-adjacent neighborhoods may be best known for their walkability, but Vivian DeLeon says the ability to walk their TPC San Antonio-area neighborhood is one of the things they enjoy most about their home. Along with daily family strolls, the family also can walk for dinner or ice cream at the nearby Villages at Stone Oak and Vivian's 15-year-old daughter Angelina Morales is near her school, Johnson High School. Real estate agents say new homes—which are most readily available on the city's outskirts—continue to be a draw, particularly for those moving this year. On the other side of Highway 281, the north edge of Stone Oak and Timberwood Park provide the feeling of living in the country. Timberwood Park has its own running paths, pool, tennis courts and other community spaces while Stone Oak Park and Johnson Park provide additional trails. Rebecca Creek Distillery is just a short drive north for music and tastings and the view from the patio at Aldaco's Mexican Cuisine rivals any you'll find in the Hill Country.

Neighborhood Numbers (78260 + 78261)

Total sales
1,681

Average price
\$369,948

Median price
\$338,750

Average days on market
98

FAR WEST

The Far West Side of San Antonio is booming. The neighborhoods outside of Loop 1604, from Highway 90 through Alamo Ranch and over to Culebra Road, saw among the highest sales in San Antonio over the last year. “There is a lot of employment and a lot of new homes available in that area,” SABOR’s Kim Bragman says, adding that the neighborhoods are close to Toyota, Lackland Air Force Base and Port San Antonio, among other places. Add that to the availability of new or nearly new homes and the area is often on newcomers’ lists of places to look. For families, much of the Far West Side falls within Northside ISD, plus it’s close to SeaWorld San Antonio, Wolff Stadium for Missions games and several parks, including the 145-acre Culebra Creek Park.

Neighborhood Numbers (78245 + 78253)

Total sales	3,678
Average price	\$250,771
Median price	\$236,383
Average days on market	78

+ One nearby city to consider: Castroville

While Boerne, Cibola/Schertz and New Braunfels continue to attract San Antonians looking for that smaller town feel, Castroville is also worth consideration. The city in Medina County has just over 3,000 residents and is situated southwest of San Antonio, just a 30-minute drive from downtown. It offers a mix of new homes—many set on lots of an acre or larger—plus older homes built to reflect the Alsace region in France where Castroville’s founder originated.



Vivian DeLeon, her husband, Derek; her daughter, Angelina Morales, 15; and their son, Alexander DeLeon, 6, pose in the window of their Far North Side home.



GOVERNMENT CANYON STATE NATURAL AREA/HELOTES

The neighborhoods in Helotes and surrounding Government Canyon State Natural Area give residents the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors while still being just a short drive away from all the conveniences—and major workplaces—of a large city. Locals can hike or bike trails at Government Canyon, Iron Horse Canyon Natural Area or the nearby Leon Creek Greenway or enjoy a socially distant game at the Helotes Disc Golf Course. For relaxing in the quiet of the Hill Country without breaking a sweat, find a seat outdoors in Old Town Helotes and enjoy a drink from Wine 101 or Busted Sandal Beer Garden. Some older homes exist but there is also plenty of inventory that’s been constructed within the last 20 years.

Neighborhood Numbers (78254 + 78023)

Total sales	1,092	Median price	\$306,500
Average price	\$333,967	Average days on market	84

INSIDE LOOP 1604



NORTHEAST/MCALLISTER PARK

Buyers looking to stay inside of Loop 1604 (but outside Loop 410) can often find a variety of homes for less than \$250,000 or even \$200,000 here, which means well-maintained and updated properties sell quickly. For the Holbrook family, the Northeast side was not only convenient, it also brought them a close-knit community. “Our neighborhood is not just houses near each other. Our neighborhood is made up of people who actually live in community with one another,” Denise Holbrook says. “We celebrate together and help in times of need, but we’re also invested in the mundane elements of the day-to-day.” Nearby, McAllister Park boasts miles of trails and places to play and the owners of Burleson Yard Beer Garden recently opened Hops & Hounds next door with food, drinks and areas for kids and dogs to play. Farther north, development near Bulverde Road and Loop 1604 has brought local options like Julian’s Italian Pizzeria.

Neighborhood Numbers (78247 + 78233)

Total sales	Median price
1,662	\$196,600
Average price	Average days on market
\$198,597	54

NORTH CENTRAL

Monica and Michael Hernandez knew they wanted to be more centrally located when they started looking to move from their Converse home just over two years ago. Their oldest daughter would be starting kindergarten and they hoped to live within North East ISD so she could attend the dual language program at Steubing Elementary School. They landed near Thousand Oaks Drive and Highway 281 and say COVID-19 quarantine reminded them how much they love it. “We like the older neighborhood with a little bit bigger lot sizes,” Monica says, adding that it’s a great place for their 7-, 5- and 4-year-olds to run off energy while she sits nearby with their 3-month-old. Plus, unlike in Converse, they no longer have to fight traffic on Loop 1604 or I-35 whenever they leave home. Nearby Hollywood Park and Hill Country Village also are known for their large lots (sometimes as big as 9 acres) while still giving residents the opportunity to be near the heart of San Antonio. Both towns have dedicated police departments and Hollywood Park offers a community swimming pool, tennis courts and other amenities. Easy access to Highway 281 means downtown is a short drive but there are also myriad local restaurants nearby, including Magnolia Pancake Haus, Meadow Neighborhood Eatery + Bar and Alamo Café. Brook Hollow Library is often crowded for story hours or Wednesday night book clubs.

Neighborhood Numbers (78232)

Total sales
486

Average price
\$311,825

Median price
\$280,000

Average days on market
80

Monica and Michael Hernandez welcomed their fourth child in March, just as hospitals were closing to visitors due to COVID-19. They wanted a photograph to remember the months where they stayed home since their children are so young they may not remember the pandemic in the years to come.



CASTLE HILLS/ALON

While many families are seeking new builds on the edges of San Antonio, others are finding they prefer to be in communities that are closer to the center of town, real estate agents say. In Castle Hills and the neighborhoods surrounding the Alon Town Center, individuals, including families with kids, find neighborhoods that have that small-town feel plus convenience to the Medical Center and the northside of downtown.

Neighborhood Numbers (78230 + 78213)

Total sales
782

Average price
\$284,678

Median price
\$235,875

Average days on market
72

Hollywood Park



The Holbrook family says they love the sense of community they’ve found in their Northeast San Antonio neighborhood and the fact that their neighbors like to celebrate, going all out to decorate for the holidays each year.

INSIDE LOOP 410



Grace Miller stands in her front yard while her mom Meredith looks on from the porch. Her dad, Rus, quarantined away from the family during the spring while he treated patients with COVID-19 as an ICU nurse at Methodist Hospital Metropolitan.

ALAMO HEIGHTS AREA

A perennial favorite for its highly rated school district, proximity to downtown and walkability, the 78209 zip code, which includes Alamo Heights, Terrell Hills, Oak Park-Northwood and Terrell Heights, among other areas, also offers a sense of community, according to Meredith and Rus Miller, who've lived in Terrell Heights with their daughter Grace for about three years. Rus, an ICU nurse, stayed in a nearby Airbnb while treating patients with COVID-19 this spring. "While Rus was quarantined, our neighbors cooked for him and brought things to cheer Grace up," Meredith says. "We love being able to walk to so many local businesses and restaurants—Nosh for happy hour (they know our daughter's favorite stuffed animal's name and dinner preference!), Boss Bagels, Twin Sisters Bakery & Cafe for breakfast and Adelante for tacos." The McNay Art Museum, Witte Museum and San Antonio Botanical Garden are all just a short walk or drive away, as well. "It has to do with the schools and just the lifestyle," says SABOR's Kim Bragman. "It's unique in San Antonio. There's always going to be a certain demand there."

Neighborhood Numbers (78209)

Total sales
559

Average price
\$522,794

Median price
\$420,000

Average days on market
117



Adele Barnett Mueschke and husband Nick Mueschke with their daughter Amelia, 5; her cousins, Molly, 7, and Maggie, 5; and Adele's sister, Claire Barnett. Claire and Adele shared the duty of homeschooling their girls during the spring so that they could both have a few uninterrupted days for work each week.

WOODLAWN HEIGHTS + HILLS/ JEFFERSON/LOMA PARK

The neighborhoods bordering The Deco District and St. Mary's University have been popular among home buyers for the past few years as young professionals and families alike search for options that offer a short commute—whether working downtown, in the Medical Center or along the I-10 corridor—plus the chance to walk or cycle to parks, entertainment and restaurants. The Deco District offers the Woodlawn Theatre and neighboring Classic Theatre plus El Paraiso Ice Cream, Panaderia Jimenez Coffee and Deco Pizzeria while Woodlawn Lake Park has paths for walking, a dog park and free fitness classes courtesy of the city's Parks and Recreation Department. Homes that can date back to the 1950s offer the character that real estate agents say many moving to San Antonio are seeking.

Veronica Montemayor and her son Waylon, 7, spent more time outside this spring and summer, whether in their yard in Lavaca or on the nearby San Antonio River Walk Mission Reach.



KING WILLIAM HISTORIC DISTRICT/SOUTHTOWN/LAVACA

Adele Barnett Mueschke and her husband Nick Mueschke knew they wanted a neighborhood with plenty of destinations for biking or walking when they decided to relocate from the suburbs three years ago. They landed in Lavaca and say it's more than lived up to expectations. "I run almost every morning along the (San Antonio) River and we like to take walks there with our daughter, who likes to look for turtles," Adele says. "We like to bike to The Friendly Spot or to Hemisfair so Amelia can play in the splash pad and we love Il Forno." Veronica Montemayor, who's building a home in the neighborhood after renting there for the past year along with her son Waylon, agrees and says she loves being within walking distance of everything from restaurants to art galleries at Blue Star. ★

Neighborhood Numbers (78228)

Total sales	434
Average price	\$153,909
Median price	\$150,000
Average days on market	67

Neighborhood Numbers (78210 + 78204)

Total sales	381
Average price	\$234,204
Median price	\$191,250
Average days on market	108

*All statistics represent sales between April 2019 and April 2020, the latest data available from the San Antonio Board of Realtors at press time.

Moving During a Pandemic

The city of San Antonio's new Metro Health director finds the perfect home while in the midst of a public health crisis

Dr. Dawn Emerick's first inclination after closing on her home in Northwest San Antonio this May was to give her real estate agent a hug.

"She was just awesome, but I couldn't do that traditional celebration that you do," says Emerick, who as director of Metro Health has been at the forefront of managing the city's response to COVID-19. "But we all laughed about it."

Emerick and her agent viewed the home with masks on and while keeping distance between themselves. Knowing another buyer was interested, Emerick put an offer in after her first walk-through, it was accepted the following day and she moved in just a few weeks later. "I had no business moving," says Emerick, who was regularly working 16-hour days this spring. "I'm so dang exhausted, but it was the right time at the right place and the right house."

Her utilities were hooked up without her ever having face-to-face contact with technicians and while she hasn't been able to explore her neighborhood yet, she says the Hill Country view, and the low interest rates, made it worth the stress of moving during a public health crisis.



Escape to Nowhere.

SAN ANTONIO AUTHOR JENNY LAWSON ON CREATING THE
ULTIMATE PLACE FOR BOOK LOVERS—AND HERSELF—AT THE
NOWHERE BOOKSHOP

BY JENNIFER HERRERA
PHOTOS BY JOSH HUSKIN

Growing up, Jenny Lawson says she “spent more time in the land of books” than she did in reality, losing hours as she explored “neverlands” that only existed within the pages of her favorite tales. Places that technically are nowhere to be found.

The *New York Times* bestselling author and San Antonian who’s also known for her humorous blog, The Bloggess, always considered opening a bookstore so when she decided to go for it after a nudge from her husband, Victor, in 2019, Nowhere Bookshop seemed like the perfect name.

Along with being a nod to those nowheres she still gets lost in while reading, Lawson jokingly says that the name also means she can truthfully tell Victor that she’s been “nowhere” even if she’s devoted the last several hours to browsing (and buying) books.

“I’ve always had the idea that it would be really lovely to have a bookstore,” Lawson says. “But it was never something that I thought I would actually do because it requires talking to people and there’s math involved.”

Lawson modeled Nowhere Bookshop on a combination of her favorite places. Her vision was to create not only a bookshop, but also a coffee, wine and beer bar that could provide an escape from reality and a safe space. Victor, who Lawson calls “a constant entrepreneur,” partnered with her to get the idea off the ground and Lawson recruited San Antonio native Elizabeth Jordan, then the CEO of powerhouse Austin independent bookstore BookPeople, to serve as the shop’s general manager.

The shop, which is located on Broadway a few blocks north of Central Market, was originally

“I’VE ALWAYS HAD THIS IDEA THAT IT WOULD BE REALLY LOVELY TO HAVE A BOOKSTORE. BUT IT WAS NEVER SOMETHING I THOUGHT I WOULD ACTUALLY DO.”

NOWHERE BOOKSHOP
5154 Broadway,
nowherebookshop.com



scheduled to open in April, but that was delayed due to COVID-19. In late spring as businesses were allowed to reopen, Lawson, who’s immunocompromised, said she would be waiting until she could ensure her employees and shoppers will be safe before setting an opening date.

Once it does open, she hopes it will provide a comforting atmosphere for customers. “You can go into some bookstores, and you just feel safe,” Lawson says. “That’s really what I wanted. I wanted there to be little nooks that you can sort of hide in, overstuffed chairs you can just relax in, there’s a bar where you can drink, but there’s also another bar on the side where you can just bring your laptop and write.”

For Lawson, creating a safe space is about more than just a comfy chair where someone can enjoy a glass of wine.

She was working in human resources when she began writing on the side about 12 years ago, first as a blogger for the *Houston Chronicle* and then on her own now-popular site, The Bloggess. She described the beginnings of her blog as “silly” musings and anecdotes about parenting a toddler, but around the time she decided to try writing full time 10 years ago, it also became about sharing her struggles with chronic depression and severe anxiety disorder. “Sharing helps break the stigma,” she told a crowd while speaking about mental health at TEDxSanAntonio talk last fall. “It’s not easy. It still isn’t, but I did it.”

Some didn’t take her openness well, but overall the response was positive. Her comments sections began filling with notes from people who said they thought they were the only ones feeling alone or broken. Then they found The Bloggess. Many were encouraged not just by Lawson but by others in the comments section. Lawson started a folder with letters she received, “the folder of 24,” that includes 24 letters from people who told her they were actively in the process of planning suicide when they decided to get help after realizing they weren’t alone. She still pulls the folder out to read



through when she's struggling.

After her blog took off, Lawson penned her memoir, *Let's Pretend This Never Happened*, which came out in 2012 and talks about her anxiety as well as her years growing up in West Texas, where her dad was a taxidermist. Lawson recalls writing her initial chapters and thinking to herself, 'Oh, there's no way anybody's going to read it.' A friend as well as author Katherine Center provided the inspiration to continue and that first book became a No. 1 *New York Times* bestseller. *Furiously Happy*, which details her experience with depression and anxiety disorder while injecting some joy and reasons to laugh along the way, followed in 2015 and her third book, *You Are Here: An Owner's Manual for Dangerous Minds*, came out in 2017. It's part-book, part-adult coloring book since Lawson says drawing is one of the things she does when anxious.

Art, she says, also become an outlet to distract her while she and her family stayed home during COVID-19. During that time, she limited her trips out and only went to her store at night when no one else was around. "In some ways, because I'm an introvert, this is the marathon I've been training for my whole life," she says. "But something about it lasting so long..."

Lawson used water damaged books and paper-mâché to craft formal gowns for a series of mannequins to be a window display. She also repainted a pig statue that holds a chalkboard, which may one day alert shoppers to upcoming author appearances. And she's working to talk Johnson into finding a home for a few more of her beloved quirky taxidermy creatures. "Elizabeth is not super into taxidermy," Lawson says. "So I'll say, 'I bought a 6-foot bear. We can call her Ruth Bader Ginsbear' and she's like, 'No. What is wrong with you?'"

But, Lawson reasons, Sir Terry Scratchett, an "enormous, giant cat" figure that sits atop a wall in the store and is a nod to humorist Sir Terry Pratchett, will need at least a few companions. "We are going to have Antelopeboelyn, an antelope that, like all of my pieces died of natural causes or has been dead longer than I've been alive," Lawson says.

The store also features an exterior mural by local artists Jennifer Khoshbin and Nanako Kishi Pastol, proclaiming "This way to Nowhere."

And while the opening of Nowhere Bookshop was put on pause, Lawson and Jordan have been fostering the type of community online that they hope will grow in the store. They launched a virtual book club, called The Fantastic Strangelings Book Club, that meets monthly to discuss a book selected by Lawson that's "maybe a little strange" or by an author who might not get much attention.

READING LIST

The women behind Nowhere Bookshop share their favorites

What is your favorite genre of literature?

JL: You know, it changes depending on my mood. Right now horror is the thing that I'm the most focused on.

EJ: Literary fiction is probably my favorite genre. I like books that have a touch of magical realism in them—like a book that everything seems really real, but one thing is off.

What is your all-time favorite book?

JL: Ray Bradbury's *From the Dust Returned*, or everything ever written by Shirley Jackson.

EJ: That is so hard. It's like picking your favorite kid. It all depends on what kind of mood I'm in.

I can read *Anne of Green Gables* books once a year because they're like my comfort food. One of my favorite books in the 2000s was a book called *The Hakawati* by Rabih Alameddine. It's got a realistic story running through it but it also has sort of like the *Arabian Nights* tales also being told.

What are you currently reading?

JL: *Horrorstör: A Novel* by Grady Hendrix

EJ: I'm reading a little bit of everything. I'm reading with my oldest son *The War That Saved My Life*, and *The War I Finally Won*. I am also reading Samantha Irby's new book, *Wow, No Thank You*.



Past books have included *Follow Me to Ground* by Sue Rainsford and June's *They Did Bad Things* by Lauren A. Forry. The group first met in January 2020 before they ever thought COVID-19 would have such an impact and by May they had around 2,500 members. "We're very, very lucky that we have such great support locally, from the internet community at large, and because of that we have a really strong book club with thousands of people in it," Lawson says.

The club not only has helped build a community, it's allowed Lawson and Jordan to keep employees on even while the store remains closed. "It's been a success. It's a little overwhelming," Jordan says, with a laugh. "It's like Oprah's (Book Club), but we actually sell the book as opposed to just recommending it." (Book club picks and other books are available for order via bookshop.org/shop/nowherebookshop.)

Still, Lawson says they can't wait to welcome book lovers in person. She has plans to bring in major authors for events as well as Texas-based writers and others who might not traditionally garner a lot of attention. She also plans to have workshops focused on getting a book deal, writing a proposal, learning to write poetry and more.

It's all part of the welcoming feel they hope the community embraces, Jordan says. "It's going to be a place for families to gather, and the city to come together, meet their favorite authors, and introduce new favorites. I'm excited to see how it winds itself into the tapestry of San Antonio," she says. ★



50 R PLATINUM TOP 50

A Note From Platinum Top 50's President/CEO

Creating meaningful connections in real estate. That's what we do.

How do we do it? By annually recognizing the top residential agents for their achievements in sales, service and leadership. Why? Because we believe you deserve to be represented by the best.

Let's be honest; today, most home searches start online. With criteria set to search your desired location and price point, you can spend hours, if not days, drowning in a sea of listings. But no matter how digital technology revolutionizes the industry, real estate will always be a personal business.

The agents featured in this directory are some of the most accomplished residential agents in San Antonio, Boerne, New Braunfels and the surrounding areas.

I encourage you to explore the agent profiles. Find a few that stand out. Connect with them. Ask questions. They know this city, and they live and breathe real estate. I know they are ready to navigate the home buying and selling process with you.

Happy house hunting!

Warmly,

Amber Thomas

Platinum Top 50 President/CEO



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My reputation is built on a commitment to providing unparalleled service, integrity and personal attention.



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I bring a lifelong knowledge of SA and 29 years of experience to you. I deliver unmatched service and results to all.



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It's so much more than just buying and selling homes, it's a family's dream, and *that* should remain the focus.



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Ranked #1 Single Residential Realtor in San Antonio for 2017 and 2018. They call me "the house whisperer."



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With over 25 years experience in the home building and real estate industry, I'm committed to exceeding expectations while providing stellar service in all areas of real estate.



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I have been helping families buy and sell homes in San Antonio since 2007. Repeat and referral business is the lifeblood of my business.



Josh Boggs

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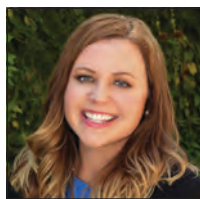
"Have you ever wondered if there was more to life, other than being really, really, ridiculously good at real estate?" lol; complete the look now with a close quote from the movie. :)



Corie Boldt

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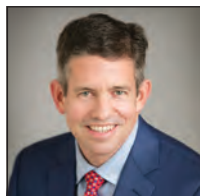
High energy power broker/owner. A native San Antonian with over 15 years real estate experience in the local market.



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Providing the very best in real estate service to clients throughout San Antonio. Trust the legacy.



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Ginger's a true professional and problem solver with a proven track record. Ranked as a top Realtor in the area.



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I take pride in navigating my clients and offering superior service in the real estate arena. It gives me so much joy.



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We are committed to providing the highest level of service and promise to always do the right thing for our clients.



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Always doing good work for good people is what has built and helped grow my business.



Patricia Chavez

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Work hard.



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My clients' needs and best interests are at the heart of everything I do.



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I am truly honored to be among San Antonio's elite real estate professionals. To my clients and my community. Thank you!



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Serving my clients and community are my greatest passion. Client experience is my ultimate goal.



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Home is the starting place of love, hope and dreams. I am very fortunate to help families start this place called "home."



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So very honored to assist every client that comes my way. Blessed to do what I love. I will treat your money like my own.



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Honesty, professionalism and experience! I love serving others and achieving my clients' goals.



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Our goal: exceed your expectations in the real estate buying/selling process, providing expertise and value every step.



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My team's mission is to achieve our clients' goals while exceeding their expectations—integrity, commitment, results.



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Your BIZZY Realtor® for all your DARLING home needs! Integrity, professionalism and customer service.



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Measured, detail-oriented and efficient. My knowledge of the industry and marketplace is second-to-none.



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I work with my clients as a team to find creative solutions to their real estate needs.



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Broker/owner who believes everyone should "love where you live." I will be your advocate for all things real estate!



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Being a Realtor is not a job. As an inactive Catholic priest, being a Realtor is about serving the needs of my clients.



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Building trust, delivering excellent customer service and working with integrity are primary focuses in building relationships with clients.



Tom Guajardo

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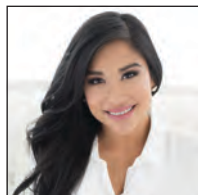
A legacy of empowering home buyers and sellers.



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A real estate advocate building relationships one client at a time.



Lisa Guzman

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As a fourth-generation resident of San Antonio, there are a few agents who are as familiar with our real estate climate as I am.



Roger Fuentes

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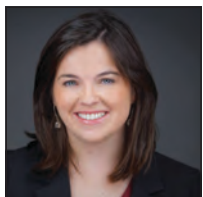
Military veteran with integrity and a strong work ethic who is dedicated to serving his clients in all their real estate needs.



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A team whose mission includes honesty, integrity, tenacity and perseverance for all clients.



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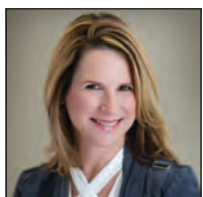
Our military spouse and veteran-run team helps military families PCS better!



Laura Berg Hodge

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From luxury clients to first-time homeowners, I'm here to help! Follow me: @letsberealestate



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Selling real estate is more than just a career, it's my passion. I love helping buyers and sellers achieve their goals.



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Ruth has over 17 years of residential real estate experience in the San Antonio and surrounding areas.



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It's not everyday someone gets to do what they love! I am passionate about people and making their dreams come true!



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Reputation is everything, so I keep this as the driving force behind all that I do.



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Broker/owner. My passion is helping veterans own a piece of this country they helped defend. #oneveteranatatime



Marisa Jackson Team

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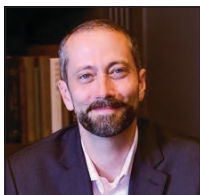
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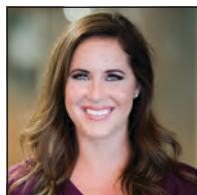
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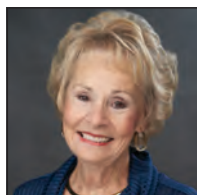
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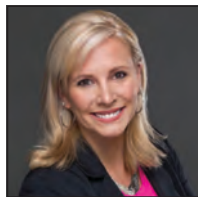
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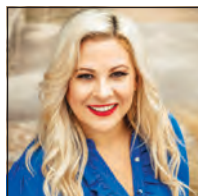
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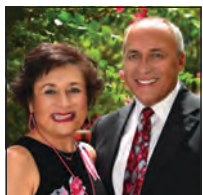
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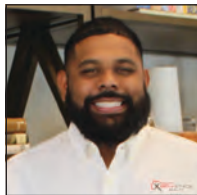
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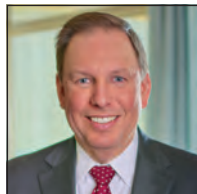
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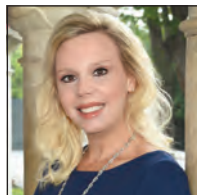
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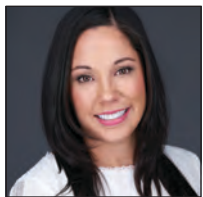
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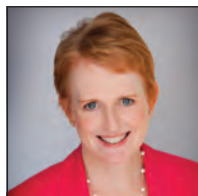
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Amid Pandemic, Community Goodwill Stays on Course



Awards. We are fortunate to have a wonderful team committed to the performing arts and willing to adapt to continue to make this possible, even in the most unusual circumstances."

Finalists had the opportunity to work in digital coaching sessions with theatre professionals

Let's Go On With The Show — Las Casas Foundation Joci Awards Competition Granted \$110K in Scholarships in Virtual Broadcast

"In these extraordinary times, the arts are needed now more than ever," says Kevin Parman, board chair for Las Casas Foundation. "For the past 12 years, Las Casas has celebrated the performing arts and Texas's rising stars through the Joci

who have worked on Broadway, off-Broadway and in the West End.

Since its inception, the Joci Awards has granted more than \$1 million in scholarship funds to deserving performing arts students and is one of the largest funding sources of its kind in the country.

Watch the virtual 2020 Joci Awards at [youtube.com/lascasasfoundation](https://www.youtube.com/lascasasfoundation). To donate visit lascasasfoundation.org and select 'Support.'



Seeds for Seniors

WellMed Medical Group, in partnership with VillaSol Insurance Solutions, is launching its Seeds for Seniors program helping elders grow fruits and vegetables in their own home garden. High-quality

seeds, pots, potting soil, and fertilizer, as well as instructions on how to care for a healthy garden, will be included. These will be available for curbside pickup once a month from various locations throughout San Antonio at no cost. "Serving seniors is at the heart of what we do," says Dr. Carlos Hernandez, president of WellMed Medical Group. Our first event is curbside, 2 to 4 p.m., Thursday, July 16, at our WellMed Medical Center office located at 4438 Centerview. For more information visit wellmedhealthcare.com.



Local Benefactor Donates 1 Ton of Produce to Group Homes Serving Down Syndrome and Autistic Individuals

Mary Flores is the mother of an individual with Down syndrome. She fully understands the challenges that similar families, and the nonprofit organizations they rely on, continue to face during the COVID-19 pandemic, so she decided to purchase 2,000 pounds (1 ton) of produce to benefit group homes serving individuals with Down syndrome and autism. Volunteers from the Autism Treatment Center, Down Syndrome Association of South Texas, Morgan's Wonderland and Reaching Maximum Independence gathered at River City Produce to fill vehicles so they could distribute produce to families and group homes in need throughout the city.

"Individuals with Down syndrome and autism can't comprehend the concept of 'shelter in place' nor adapt well to quarantine; their daily program and therapy is based on consistency and routine. Also, a large majority rely on day programs and group homes for therapy and meals," says Flores.

Flores' donation will feed approximately 4,000 individuals. Monetary and in-kind donations of personal care and household items are especially appreciated. **Please donate directly to the organization of choice.**

Eat + Drink

INSIDE / REDEFINING DINING OUT p.58 / CHEF TURNED WOOD WORKER p.60 / COMFORT FOOD p.62

Taste of Sunset

The team at Garrison Brothers Distillery says its Small Batch Texas Straight Bourbon is like a Texas sunset—rich and full. Founded in 2006 by Dan Garrison, the Hye distillery produces straight bourbon whiskey that's barrel-aged. As the spring, summer and fall heat hits the steel barn where the barrels are stored, the wood heats up, allowing the spirit to age multiple seasons in a year and to soak in flavors of vanilla, oak and nutmeg. It has amassed so many regional fans that it now has a waitlist of more than 15,000 who want to volunteer to help on bottling days. Outside of Texas, it's garnered more than a few nods, as well. At this year's San Francisco World Spirits Competition, Garrison Brothers won a double gold medal for its Balmorhea Twice-Barreled Bourbon, a silver for its Single Barrel Bourbon and a bronze for its Small Batch Bourbon. When you can't escape to the distillery's Whiskey Shack in Hye to savor a sip and a sunset, enjoy it over ice at home or as part of a cocktail, like the Peachy Night in Fredericksburg, which includes mesquite-grilled peaches that bring out the whiskey's fruity notes.—KATHLEEN PETTY



A Peachy Night in Fredericksburg

INGREDIENTS

2 ounces Garrison Brothers Small Batch Bourbon
¾ ounce hand-squeezed lime juice
¾ ounce turbinado simple syrup
3 slices of grilled peach (sprinkled with mesquite seasoning prior to grilling)
3 sprigs fresh mint
Lemon slice (optional)

PREPARATION

Add bourbon, lime juice, simple syrup, two of the grilled peach slices and two sprigs of mint into a mixing glass. Muddle vigorously. Pour contents into ice-filled shaker tin. Shake and strain into rocks glass filled with ice. Garnish with remaining grilled peach slice, mint and, if desired, lemon.

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Survival of the Resilient

The coming months could reshape the local restaurant landscape as we know it, but with creativity many will persevere

BY EDMUND TIJERINA

Dining out as we knew it is gone. At the start of the year, one of my most profound joys that came from visiting a restaurant was when diners at an adjacent table would make casual conversation and leave my wife and I feeling like we'd made new friends while enjoying a leisurely meal. Now, we look at diners as potential virus carriers. Instead of intimately crowded dining rooms, we encounter intentionally spaced out tables. Servers wearing masks and gloves has become as standard as "Midnight City" is on the playlist of hipster hot spots.

"It's not just affecting restaurants," says Steve McHugh, chef/owner of Cured at Pearl. "Nothing in life seems like it should. Nothing seems normal. It feels weird."

But what does that mean for a city that has increasingly touted its food scene as a crucial part of its identity? For starters, it means fewer restaurants.

The estimates of how many restaurants we'll lose in the months to come range from 25 to 30 percent by the Texas Restaurant Association to as many as 75 percent, according to celebrity chef Tom Colicchio.

Even those that do survive won't be back to their usual operations anytime soon. Peter Selig, longtime entrepreneur and president of the management companies of Biga on the Banks, Ácenar and Maverick Texas Brasserie, estimates that it will take anywhere from 18 to 36 months before many restaurants see sales return to pre-pandemic levels.

"Mom and pops that have low rent and low management overhead, fixed costs, and inexpensive ingredients, with a large fast-casual service/to-go (model) will survive and do well," Selig says. "Those who have access to capital and have resilience and persistence with reasonable landlords will survive."

In other words, the places with deep pockets, understanding



landlords and many of the small, independent family-owned spots and taquerias that are at the heart of the city are well-positioned to survive.

"Hard work is going to be key," McHugh says. "There are a lot of places—the neighborhood taquerias, they have been working their asses off and I think they're going to survive. And that's huge."

Venues that offer a leisurely, sit-down experience with excellent wine service, expensive entrees, craft cocktails and superbly trained chefs are going to have a much tougher time.

The pandemic hit at a time when San Antonio's restaurant scene already was at a plateau. Several local restaurants closed at the end of 2019 and start of 2020, not because they weren't producing good food but because there's only so much business to go around. Add to that a few months of closed dining rooms, tepid consumer spending even as lockdowns were lifted in late spring and the fact that many food lovers used their quarantine to rediscover the joys of cooking at home. Plus, the convention industry, which was a regular supplement to local traffic for places like Maverick, has ground to a halt, further impacting restaurants and other businesses that rely on visitors.

"Sadly, many very good restaurants will close," Selig says. "It's just hard to cover fixed costs."

Yet, from this chaos is an opportunity for a new wave of creativity.

Some chefs have found new revenue streams by creating meal and grocery kits. Traditional sit-down places that are able to reinvent themselves with some of that fast-casual model—whether through continued takeout, delivery, drinks to-go or more outdoor seating—have a strong chance of emerging. Survival could also very well come from chefs creating totally new concepts or concepts that have worked in the past, like food trucks or food carts. Perhaps enterprising restaurateurs will bring echoes of the drive and initiative found in the historic chili stands that garnered San Antonio national fame more than a century ago.

"I believe that we will need to focus on bringing locals into our restaurants, and also making it easy for them to buy our food at a reasonable price when they want to eat at home," says Johnny Hernandez, the chef and partner of the Grupo La Gloria restaurants. Along with continuing to offer takeout after La Gloria reopened, Hernandez also became part of an H-E-B program that brought ready-to-heat local restaurant food into grocery stores and he introduced margarita trucks that brought food and drinks to locals at home. "As a city, we need to focus on each other. We need to continue to support local and to support each other." ★

SCOTT MARTIN

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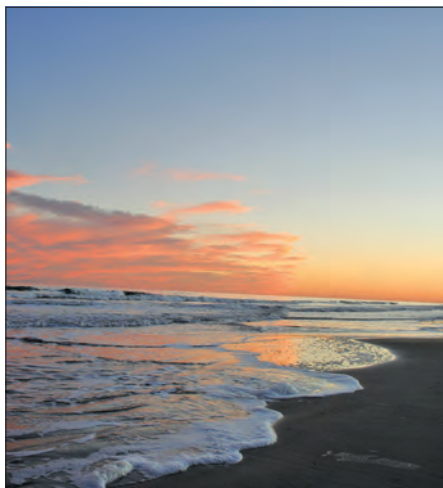
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Kitchen Craft

Bexar Wood founder turns love of cooking into passion for handmade kitchen tools and surfaces

AS A TRAINED CHEF WITH A LIFELONG PASSION FOR food, Bobby Cabrera has always had an appreciation for high-quality ingredients. While spending his 20s traveling the globe—backpacking while cooking in New Zealand kitchens and preparing food at a winery while living near the beach in Western Australia—he began to gain an equal appreciation for the tools and surfaces used in kitchens and dining rooms.

"I saw these amazing kitchens and my vision went from food to the table it was sitting on," he says. He found himself particularly drawn to items crafted out of wood. If he was making gnocchi from scratch, he wanted to create it on a handmade gnocchi board. If he presented a charcuterie plate to guests, he wanted the cutting

board to be as much a work of art as the food.

Cabrera returned to his hometown of San Antonio a few years ago and eventually partnered with Box Street Social, the food truck that has plans to open a brick-and-mortar location at Hemisfair this year. Along with consulting on the truck's menu, particularly for catering weddings and events, the partnership gave Cabrera the opportunity to pursue his interest in woodworking. The truck received a request for a custom bar for a wedding reception and Cabrera went to work, watching YouTube to learn techniques and experimenting with wood until he was happy with the finished product.

He's since created multiple custom bars for events as well as coffee and kitchen tables, cutting boards, stools and kitchen tools, from spoons to rolling pins. "I love working with my hands, so this was just an extension of my craft," he says. He works based on commissions and also sells various items through Instagram. Going forward, Cabrera is putting an emphasis on locally sourced wood, cutting his own wood and working with San Antonio arborists to salvage and repurpose trees or buildings whenever possible. "It's taking wood from San Antonio and giving it new life," he says. "I'm learning every day." —KP



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GROWN-UP PALETAS

Paletería San Antonio shares its recipe for tequila-infused pops

Joey and Cecy Rodriguez have crafted so many different flavor combinations at Paletería San Antonio that they have trouble remembering them all. "We usually have around 16 flavors at a time, but we've made about 90 flavors," Joey Rodriguez says, rattling off a menu that has included everything from pickle, chamoy and hibiscus to Oreo milk. One staple over the four years the couple have operated their Hemisfair shop: classic lime. During the spring when San Antonians were staying home due to COVID-19, Joey Rodriguez turned those lime paletas into happy hour treats by adding a splash of El Jimador tequila to the mix before freezing them. Available by delivery only, the adult paletas had just a hint of alcohol and were meant to provide the pick-me-up parents were missing without the ability to visit bars and restaurants. And while the grown-up paletas aren't available for purchase when you're walking through Hemisfair, they can still be ordered for pickup or made at home. Rodriguez says most of their recipes are simple, which is exactly why customers say they love them. "With all of our recipes, we use real ingredients so you can actually taste the fresh lime juice or see the pieces of fruit or pickles," he says. —KP

Adults-Only Lime Paleta

INGREDIENTS

½ cup freshly squeezed lime juice
6 cups water
6 tablespoons sugar
1 cup tequila

PREPARATION

Mix fresh lime juice, water, sugar and tequila in a pitcher. Pour into popsicle molds (this recipe should fill between six and eight molds). Place in freezer for 24 hours. Enjoy!

RECIPE NOTES:

These paletas can be made kid-friendly by simply eliminating the tequila. If you want a touch of chamoy, remove the popsicles from the freezer when they're about half frozen, sprinkle chamoy over the top and return to freezer. Not into lime? The lime juice can be easily swapped for lemon, orange or other types of juice.

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COMFORT FOOD CRAVINGS

Quell your stress with a calorie splurge

BY KATHERINE STINSON

Fried Chicken Sandwich by Cullum's Attagirl

Chris Cullum and his crew at Cullum's Attagirl know fried chicken is a classic comfort go-to but they've stepped their sandwich up a notch by adding a tangy sauce, pickled red cabbage slaw and a crispy egg. The chicken is seasoned for 48 hours in buttermilk and spices before being covered with flour and fried. "Our chicken sandwich is epic," Cullum says. "We make a special sauce that we call a Neon Trailer that is a creamy and tangy sauce studded with poppy seeds ... This beauty sits on a Martin's potato roll. She is classy." 726 E. Mistletoe Ave., 210-437-4263, cullumsattagirl.com

Avocado Toast by What's Brewing?

Operations manager Sami Chbeir says avocado toast has been the go-to for customers since mid-March. "Fresh-baked seed loaf from The Bread Box is toasted on our grill and topped with freshly cut and mashed fully ripened avocado, sliced tomatoes, minced onion and fresh ground salt and pepper. It's dressed with balsamic vinaigrette and served on a bed of mixed greens." Treat yourself by adding on some roasted turkey or a drizzle of spicy cream avocado sauce. Drive thru: 12054 Blanco Road; café: 138 W. Rhapsody, 210-308-8882, sacoffeeoasters.com

Strawberry Tres Leches Concha by Miss Chickpeas

Owner Tatiana Martinez didn't think conchas would become a menu staple at her vegan bakery, but she can't argue with customer demand. "They are that dang good," she says. For

this dessert, Martinez soaks her strawberry concha in three vegan milks before baking it, then cuts it in half and adds a mound of dairy-free ice cream, homemade strawberry jam and fresh strawberries between the two pieces of Mexican sweet bread. "Growing up in San Antonio, pan dulce is just a way of life," Martinez says, explaining why she had to make a vegan version when her family began eating that way. "I still remember as a kid my mom would buy conchas from H-E-B." If the stuffed version sounds too indulgent, she also offers an assortment of regular vegan conchas. 8065 Callaghan Road, 210-993-0748, misschickpeas.com

Holy Mac by Holy Smoke BBQ + Taquitos

This mac by pitmaster David Romero is nothing short of heavenly. It starts with a base of smoked mac and cheese that is topped with certified Angus beef brisket and Holy Smoke's homemade barbecue sauce. Sliced jalapeños add just the right amount of spice. Romero and founder Ricky Ortiz opened their food truck on March 1 and say the mac—plus their signature barbacoa—have been what people are craving as they venture out of the house. Paper Tiger parking lot: 2410 N. St. Mary's St., 210-550-2426, facebook.com/holysmokesa

Puffy Taco by Henry's Puffy Tacos

A simple taco on housemade flour or corn fills many-a-comfort-food longing, but in San Antonio, there's no reason not to upgrade to the puffy taco. A staple at Henry's since 1978, the fried corn masa tortilla offers the perfect amount of crunch and fried goodness. The bean and cheese or shredded chicken taco are favorites, but you can't go wrong with carne guisada or guacamole—all topped with lettuce and tomato, of course. 6030 Bandera Road, 210-647-8339; 3202 W. Woodlawn Ave., 210-433-7833, henrypuffytacos.com ★

OFF MENU

News from the restaurant scene

Food & Wine included **Bakery Lorraine** and **La Panadería** in its list of the "Top 100 Best Bakeries in America." / Cured at Pearl chef **Steve McHugh** was the only San Antonio chef to be named a finalist in the James Beard Awards' Best Chef: Texas category. The winner will be announced Sept. 25 in a live broadcast via Twitter. / On Mother's Day, Spurs guard **Patty Mills** asked the community to visit one of eight local coffee shops. He doubled the sales totals and donated \$103,965, to Family Violence Prevention Services. / *Southern Living* named **Pearl Farmers Market** one of the best markets in the South. / Austin-based donut chain **Gourdough's** on the River Walk, SAM 2019 Best New Restaurant **Eastside Kitchenette**, **Spaghetti Warehouse**, **Daylight Donuts** and the Quarry Market location of local chain **Papouli's Greek Grill** have all closed permanently. / Mexico-based chain **Cerveceria Chapultepec** will open in the former Fontaine's Southern Diner & Bar.



Do you have a go-to for takeout?

These days, a few places have become my regular spots. First, Southerleigh Fine Food & Brewery, which offered a fried chicken-for-two special that included enough chicken for dinner and lunch the next day plus two sides, a salad and a bottle of sparkling wine or a six-pack for \$42. It's delicious and a great deal. Even when the deal isn't being offered, you can't go wrong with their fried chicken to-go. I'm also a fan of the weekend specials at Barbaro. And my son especially loves Il Forno's pizza. They had an offer that included a margherita pizza and another pizza of choice plus a bottle of house wine for \$35. We usually add a house salad to our order. If you can get wine to go, why wouldn't you?

Six Patios for Outdoor Dining

ALDACO'S \$\$ Mexican/Latin American (Stone Oak) This upscale, yet casual eatery's patio has one of the best views in town—attracting guests for the relaxing atmosphere as much as for the margaritas and Tex-Mex favorites. 20079 Stone Oak Pkwy., 210-494-0561, aldacosrestaurants.com

THE COVE \$ American (Downtown) This institution pairs a laundromat and car wash next to a bustling and dog-friendly beer garden, but food is the real focus. Vegetarians can bite into the vegan bacon cheeseburger while their carnivore companions chow down on grass-fed beef and bison burgers. L-D Tues-Sun. 606 W. Cypress St., 210-227-2683, thecove.us

FRALO'S \$\$ Pizza (Northwest) There are a limited number of indoor seats at this Leon Springs pizza favorite, but regulars come for the outdoor tables set under twinkling lights at the foot of the Hill Country and live music on the weekends. There's plain cheese for the kids but nothing else here is "plain," from the baked goat cheese and olive tapenade appetizer to the Grant's Pear pizza with prosciutto and caramelized pears. 23651 I-10 W., 210-698-6616, fralos.com

THE GOOD KIND \$-\$\$ American (Southtown) Place an order for pickup or at the restaurant's counter for quick, healthy dishes, from customizable market bowls with black rice and grilled or roasted veggies to paninis, salads and gluten-free mac and cheese. Cold-pressed juices and creative cocktails also are available and best enjoyed in the restaurant's spacious outdoor garden. 1127 S. St. Mary's St., 210-564-9140, eatgoodkind.com

LA GLORIA \$-\$\$ Mexican (Pearl, Dominion) Whether at its original Pearl location or in the Dominion, Chef Johnny Hernandez's restaurants provide the casual atmosphere of a Texas ice house with Mexican street food flavors. Find tables situated under umbrellas or near misters with live music on some nights. 21819 I-10, 210-265-3315; 100 E. Grayson St., 210-267-9040, chefjohnnyhernandez.com/lagloria

RESTAURANT GWENDOLYN \$\$\$ American (Downtown) Make reservations at a table for two overlooking the River Walk and enjoy three- and five-course prix fixe meals by Chef Michael Sohocki. 152 E. Pecan St., Ste. 100, 210-222-1849, restaurantgwendolyn.com

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San Antonio
MAGAZINE



Pandemic Parallels

Closures enacted during COVID-19 mirror those seen during the height of Texas' polio epidemic

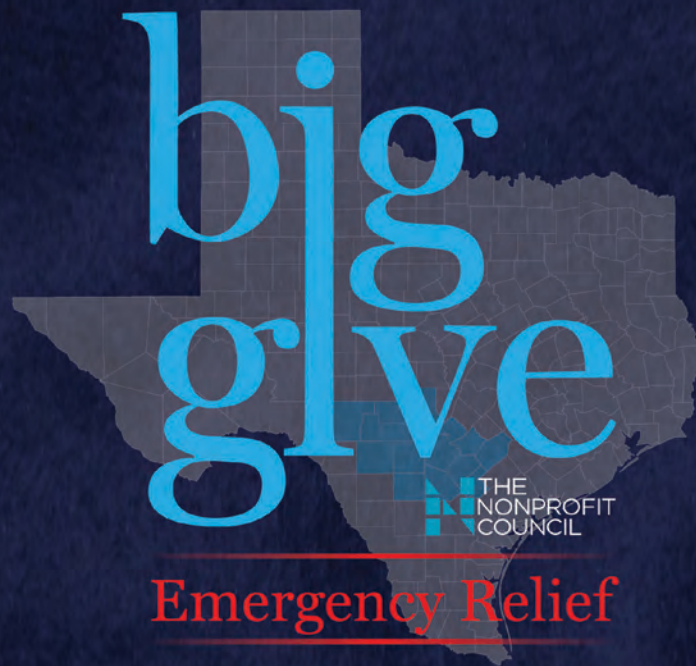
BY KATHLEEN PETTY

In May of 1946, San Antonio Park Police used A-frame wooden barricades to block the entrance to trails at Brackenridge Park, affixing signs that alerted those younger than 21 they were not permitted by order of the health department. Officer Mavesto Garcia, pictured, was on-site May 12 to enforce the rule when two teens showed up at the park's Broadway entrance. This photo ran alongside a *San Antonio Express-News* article that week that discussed how public and private schools, parks and swimming pools were closing to youth in an effort to prevent the spread of polio, which adapted to heat and sunlight and was at its worst in South Texas from May through October, according to *The Polio Years in Texas*, a book by Heather Green Wooten. At its height, polio impacted around 16,000 annually in Texas and killed 2,000 a year. Houston bore the brunt of the state's cases, reporting the second highest rate of polio in the nation, but Wooten writes that the whole South Texas region was impacted. San Antonio saw 13 deaths in the summer of 1946.

Similar to COVID-19, polio was spread largely through contaminated objects and unwashed hands; the virus caused paralysis and death among some, while others experienced only flu-like symptoms. By closing schools and limiting interaction among children through the summer, Wooten writes that officials hoped to limit its impact in Texas—in much the same way that local leaders hoped to limit the spread of the coronavirus this spring. Closures in both eras certainly brought challenges, said Ann Marie Ryan, UTSA professor and chair in the Department of Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching at University of Texas at San Antonio, and teachers had to get creative, then as now, to figure out how to educate kids, relying on remote options like radio broadcasts to reach students at home. ★

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Between the opening of the Emergency Relief site on March 18 and its closing on May 31 we helped **321 agencies** raise nearly **\$932,000** from over **4200 individual gifts**. We hope you will join us on September 10 for our rescheduled Big Give!

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